

BREASTFEEDING

Breastfeeding has been shown to promote the health and development of infants, as well as their immunity to disease. It also confers a number of maternal benefits, such as a decreased risk of breast and ovarian cancers and other chronic conditions, including cardiovascular disease.^{78,79} Among infants born in 2009, 76.9 percent were reported to have ever been breastfed, representing a significant increase over the 70.9 percent of infants ever breastfed in 2000.⁸⁰ The American Academy of Pediatrics Section on Breastfeeding recommends exclusive breastfeeding—with no supplemental food or liquids—through the first 6 months of life, and continued supplemental breastfeeding through at least the first year.⁸¹ Studies have indicated that if 90 percent of US

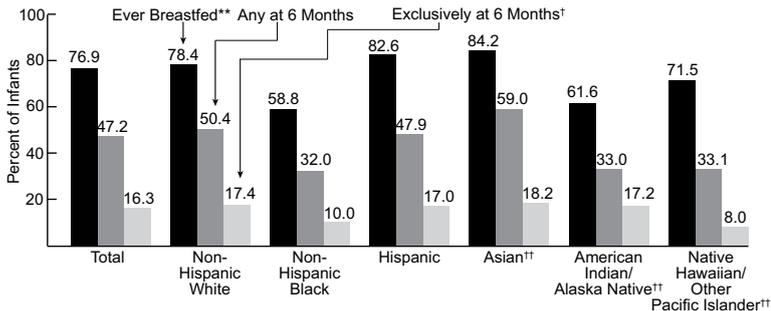
newborns breastfed exclusively for their first 6 months, direct medical costs could be reduced by \$2.2 billion annually.⁸² Breastfeeding practices vary considerably by maternal race/ethnicity, education, age, and income. With respect to race and ethnicity, the proportion of infants to have ever been breastfed was higher among Asian, Hispanic, and non-Hispanic White infants (84.2, 82.6, and 78.4 percent, respectively) as compared to non-Hispanic Black infants (58.8 percent). The proportion of infants to breastfeed was highest among those born to mothers with at least a college education (89.0 percent) as compared to mothers of all other educational levels. Children born to mothers aged 30 years or older were the most likely to have been breastfed (81.7 percent), while children born to mothers aged

less than 20 years were the least likely to (55.4 percent; data not shown).

Overall, less than half (47.2 percent) of infants born in 2009 were fed breastmilk for the first six months of life and 16.3 percent were exclusively breastfed. The proportion of infants to exclusively breastfeed was highest among those born to mothers with at least a college education (21.3 percent) as compared to mothers all other educational levels. Common barriers to exclusive breastfeeding include maternal employment, pain related to breastfeeding, and unsupportive hospital policies.⁸³ The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act requires most health insurance plans to provide breastfeeding support, counseling, and equipment to pregnant and nursing women (see page 41).⁸⁴

Infants* Who Are Breastfed by Race/Ethnicity and Duration, 2009

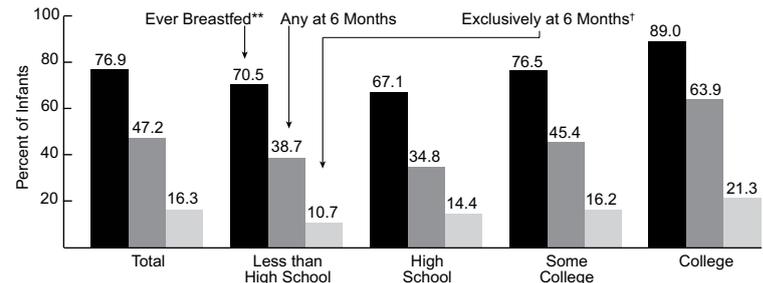
Source (II.7): Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Immunization Survey



*Includes only infants born in 2009; data are preliminary. **Reported that child was ever breastfed or fed human breastmilk. †Exclusive breastfeeding is defined as only human breastmilk—no solids, water, or other liquids. ††Includes Hispanics.

Infants* Who Are Breastfed by Maternal Education and Duration, 2009

Source (II.7): Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Immunization Survey



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