

Births - Breastfeeding

Why It Is Important

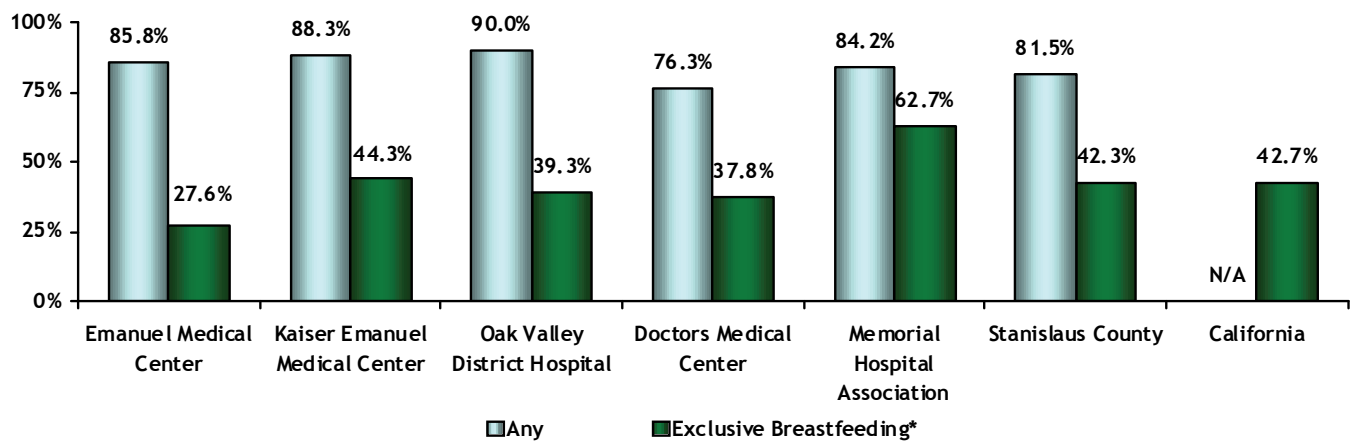
The American Academy of Pediatrics, American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, American Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine, and World Health Organization all recommend exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of life.

Breastfeeding is of benefit to the infant, the mother, families, and society. Studies have shown that infants who are breastfed have a decrease in incidences of ear infections, diarrhea, and respiratory problems compared to non-breastfed infants, as well as less hospitalizations. Some studies have even suggested that the occurrence of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), within the first year of life, is lower among infants who have been breastfed.

More than 86% of California mothers breastfeed or provide breast milk for their infants during the hospital stay after the delivery. Unfortunately, only half of these babies – 43% of all California infants – are breastfed exclusively; that is, breast milk is their only food.¹⁵

Breastfeeding is a low-tech and low cost health intervention that can reduce and prevent childhood obesity and related problems, such as type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and hypertension, saving millions of dollars.^{16,17}

Figure 64: In-Hospital Breastfeeding Rates, Stanislaus County, 2007



Source: State of California, Department of Public Health, Center for Family Health, Genetic Disease Screening Program, Newborn Screening Data, 2008.

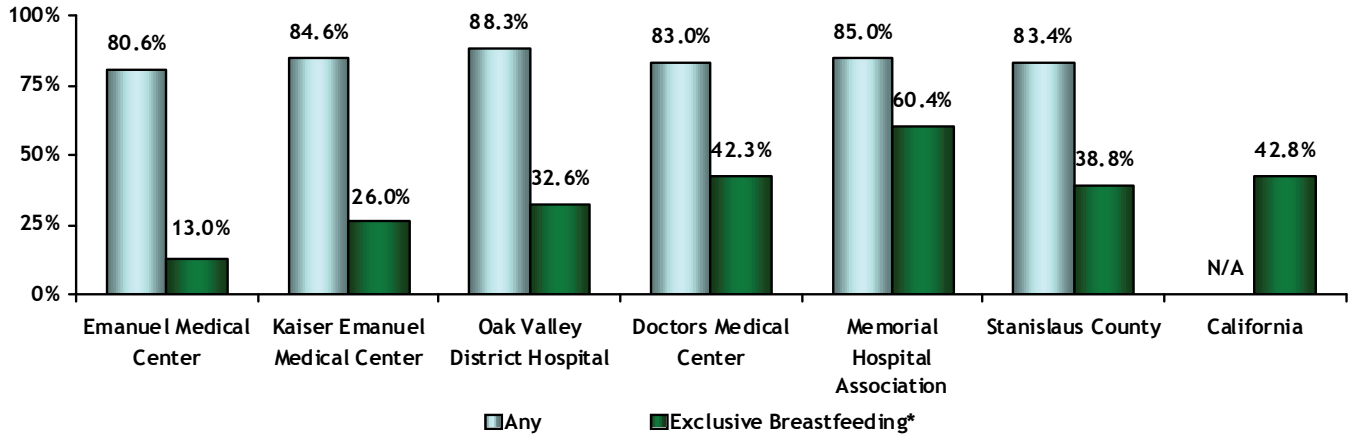
* Mothers who breastfeed or provide breast milk for their infants during the hospital stay and no other food or fluid.

¹⁵ California In-hospital Breastfeeding Rates. Statewide, County, and Hospital of Occurrence by Race/Ethnicity, 2006. <http://cdph.ca.gov/data/statistics/Pages/BreastfeedingStatistics.aspx>

¹⁶ Finkelstein EA, Fiebelkorn IC, Wang G. State-level estimates of annual medical expenditures attributable to obesity. *Obes Res.* 2004; 12: 18-24.

¹⁷ Weiss R, Spiro S. The metabolic consequences of childhood obesity. *Best Pract Res Clin Endocrinol Metab.* 2005; 19: 405-419.

Figure 65: In-Hospital Breastfeeding Rates, Stanislaus County, 2006



Source: State of California, Department of Public Health, Center for Family Health, Genetic Disease Screening Program, Newborn Screening Data, 2008.

* Mothers who breastfeed or provide breast milk for their infants during the hospital stay and no other food or fluid.

Figure 66: Percentage of Mothers Who Exclusively Breastfeed* Their Infants During Their Hospital Stay, by Race/Ethnicity

Race/Ethnicity	2006		2007	
	Stanislaus County	California	Stanislaus County	California
African American	35.9	34.2	32.2	33.1
American Indian	N/A	54.3	N/A	56.6
Asian	28.9	44.5	38.7	43.8
Pacific Islander	N/A	40.6	N/A	36.3
White	55.1	64.0	58.7	63.6
Hispanic	29.1	32.1	32.8	32.4
Other	42.6	44.2	45.0	44.3
Multiple race	35.2	54.7	41.2	55.8
Total	38.8	42.8	42.3	42.7

Source: State of California, Department of Public Health, Center for Family Health, Genetic Disease Screening Program, Newborn Screening Data, 2008.

* Mothers who breastfeed or provide breast milk for their infants during the hospital stay and no other food or fluid.

Data Summary

In 2007, the percentage of Stanislaus County mothers who exclusively breastfed their infants when staying in-hospital varied depending upon the hospital. The highest percentage was 63% at Memorial Hospital Association and the lowest was 28% at Emanuel Medical Center. In 2006, 39% of Stanislaus County infants were exclusively breastfed during their hospital stay, meaning breast milk was their only food. Memorial Hospital Association reported the highest level of exclusive breastfeeding (60%), while Emanuel Medical Center reported the lowest level of exclusive breastfeeding (13%).

When broken down by race/ethnicity, in 2006, Whites reported the highest level of exclusive breastfeeding on both the County and state levels (55% and 64%, respectively). Exclusive breastfeeding was more prominent at the state level with every race/ethnicity except for African Americans in 2006. In 2007, 42% of mothers on average in Stanislaus County exclusively breastfed their infants up from 39% in 2006. When broken down by ethnicity, the highest percentage of those who exclusively breastfed was among White mothers (59%) and the lowest was among African American mothers (32%) and Hispanic mothers (33%).