



Alabama Vital Stats

Alabama Department of Public Health

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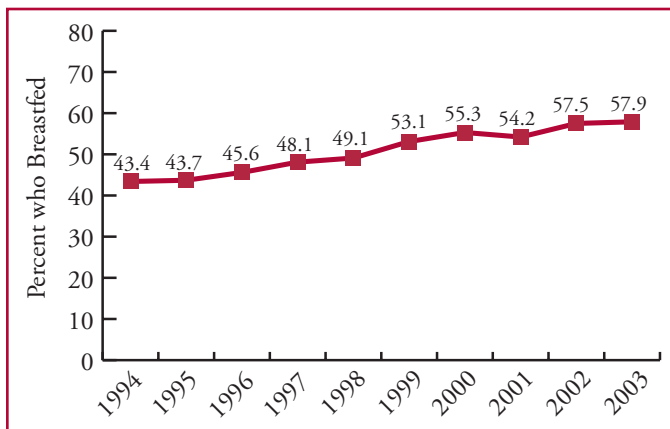
December 2005

Alabama Breastfeeding in 2003

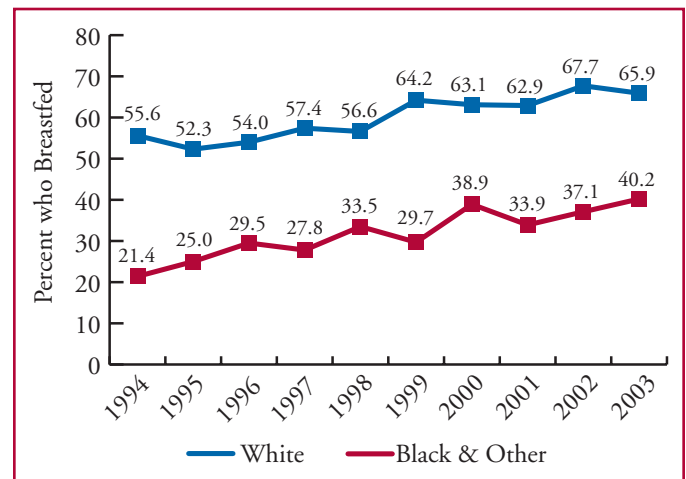
The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) “**emphasizes that human milk is uniquely superior for infant feeding.**”¹ The AAP recommends breastfeeding start “**as soon after birth as possible, and considers exclusive breastfeeding without supplementation as the ideal nutrition for the first 6 months of life.**”²

In 2003, 57.9 percent of Alabama mothers initiated breastfeeding their infants. This is the highest percentage reported by the PRAMS (Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System) survey in the past ten years.

Percent of Mothers who Initiated Breastfeeding, Alabama PRAMS 1994 - 2003



Percent of Mothers who Initiated Breastfeeding by Mother's Race, Alabama PRAMS 1994 - 2003



- From 1994 to 2003, there has been a statistically significant increase in breastfeeding initiation among all races in Alabama, but a higher percentage (65.9) of white mothers breastfed their babies than black or other race mothers (40.2 percent).
- In 2003, 90.3 percent of Alabama mothers reported receiving breastfeeding information at their WIC (the Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children) visits. (A goal of WIC is to educate pregnant women on breastfeeding and increase its prevalence among new mothers)
- In 2003, 90.1 percent of Alabama mothers were given information about breastfeeding by the hospital staff after their children were born. However, only 49.4 percent said the hospital staff helped them breastfeed and only 52 percent breastfed their babies at the hospital.
- In 2003, 63.2 percent of mothers, age 35 years or older, breastfed their infants; 60.8 percent of mothers, age 20 to 34 years, breastfed; and 40.9 percent of teen mothers (10 to 19 years old) initiated breastfeeding.
- Of Alabama mothers who did initiate breastfeeding, 5.8 percent breastfed for less than one week, 28.7 percent breastfed for one week or more, and only 23.2 percent were still breastfeeding at the time of the PRAMS survey (approximately 2 to 4 months postpartum).

While Alabama mothers have made progress in breastfeeding in the past ten years, there is still much room for improvement. The Healthy People 2010 Objective, a project of the US Department of Health and Human Services, has set the following as goals for breastfeeding in the United States:

- For 75% of mothers to breastfeed their infants in the first six weeks after birth.
- For 50% of mothers to breastfeed their babies through six months of age.
- For 25% of mothers to still be breastfeeding their infants at one year of age.

Breastfeeding Benefits for Infant:

- Increases immunity against infectious diseases such as bacterial meningitis, bacteremia, diarrhea, respiratory infections, otitis media, and urinary tract infections.³
- Enhances cognitive development.⁴
- Reduces risk of obesity, diabetes, and asthma.
- Reduces risk of death in postneonatal infants.

Breastfeeding Benefits for Mother:

- Reduces risk of premenopausal breast cancer and ovarian cancer.⁵
- Reduces risk of spinal and hip fractures in postmenopausal women.⁵
- Helps to return to pre-pregnancy weight more readily.
- Fewer sick visits to the Doctor and reduced healthcare costs.

For more information on breastfeeding or WIC, please contact:

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The PRAMS project is a survey of new mothers in Alabama that is funded under a grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, cooperative agreement #U50-CCU407103-13.



Alabama
PRAMS
Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System

¹ AMA (CSA) Report 2 of the Council on Scientific Affairs (A-05) Full Text. Page 2.
<http://www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/category/15169.html>. Found November 3, 2005

² American Academy of Pediatrics Policy Statement: Breastfeeding and the use of human milk. *Pediatrics*. 2005;115: 496-506.

³ Kramer MS, Kakuma R. Optional duration of exclusive breastfeeding (Cochrane Review). *The Cochrane Library*. 2004; Issue 4.

⁴ Horwood LJ, Fergusson DM. Breastfeeding and later cognitive and academic outcomes. *Pediatrics*. 1998;101 (1):e9.

⁵ Lobbok MH. Effects of breastfeeding on the mother. *Pediatr Clin North Am*. 2001; 48:143-158.