



Maternity Care Practices Make a Difference for Breastfeeding

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The early postpartum period is a crucial stage for women to establish successful breastfeeding both in terms of duration and exclusivity. Because of this, hospitals play an important role in providing accurate breastfeeding information and support to new mothers.

Evidence for Improving Breastfeeding through Maternity Care Practices in Illinois

Breastfeeding mothers were included in a study about the impact of maternity care practices on breastfeeding duration and exclusivity at six weeks postpartum. Among women initiating breastfeeding, women who reported experiencing certain maternity hospital practices were compared to women not experiencing those same practices. Results were adjusted to control for other characteristics that might affect breastfeeding continuation or exclusivity, such as race/ethnicity and age.

The Effect of Maternity Care Practices on Breastfeeding Duration ≥6 Weeks among Women who Initiated Breastfeeding

	Women who experienced the practice were _____ to continue breastfeeding for ≥ 6 weeks than women who did not experience the practice.	Women who experienced the practice were _____ to exclusively breastfed for ≥ 6 weeks than women who did not experience the practice.
Breastfed in the hospital	32% more likely	43% more likely
Breastfed in the first hour after delivery	17% more likely	45% more likely
Baby fed only breast milk in the hospital	34% more likely	*Not assessed
Hospital staff gave a breastfeeding support phone number	8% more likely	13% more likely
Baby stayed in room with mom (24-hour rooming in)	10% more likely	26% more likely
Hospital told mom to breastfeed whenever baby wanted it ("on demand")	12% more likely	22% more likely
Hospital DID NOT give a formula gift pack	8% more likely	31% more likely
Baby NOT given pacifier in hospital	13% more likely	36% more likely

Data Source: Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System, 2004-2008.



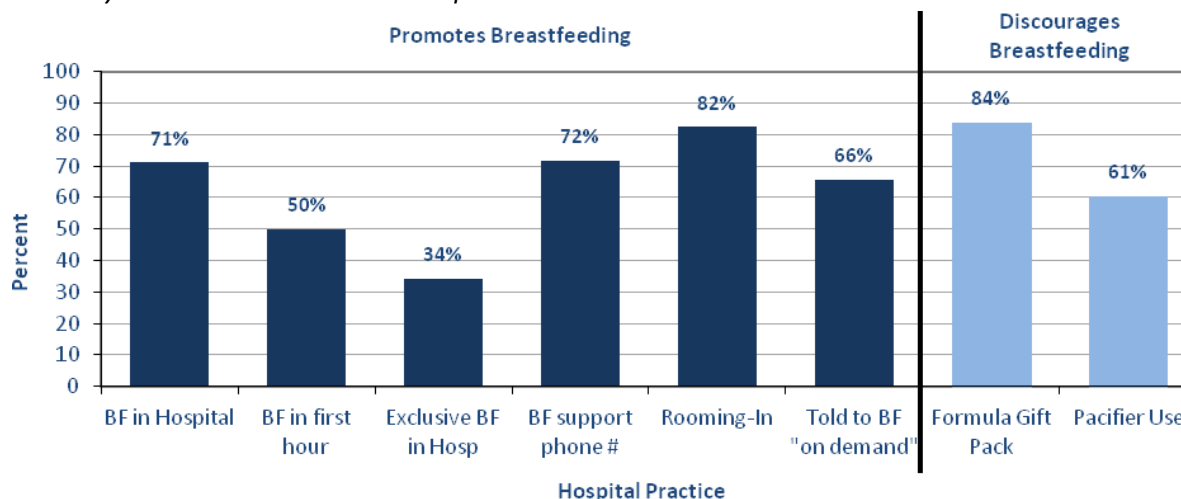
Eight specific hospital practices* were shown to improve breastfeeding duration and exclusivity among Illinois mothers who initiated breastfeeding. These practices were:

- Breastfeeding in the hospital
- Beginning breastfeeding within an hour after delivery
- Giving the infant only breast milk in the hospital
- Giving a breastfeeding support phone number
- Rooming-in
- Encouraging breastfeeding on-demand
- Not giving pacifiers
- Not giving formula gift packs

Chicago hospitals can support breastfeeding by encouraging these practices that demonstrate effectiveness at improving breastfeeding continuation and exclusivity.

How Common Are Breastfeeding-Supportive Practices in Illinois Maternity Hospitals?

The Percent of Illinois Women who Recently Gave Birth that Experienced Breastfeeding-Supportive Maternity Care Practices in Illinois Hospitals



ata Source: PRAMS, 2008

Illinois hospitals should aim to implement more practices that are shown to increase breastfeeding exclusivity and duration, such as breastfeeding within the first hour after delivery.

- Seventy-one percent of Illinois women reported that they breastfed in the hospital, but only 50% reported that they breastfed within the first hour after delivery.
- Only 34% of women reported that their infant was fed only breast milk in the delivery hospital.

Unfortunately, two practices shown to discourage breastfeeding exclusivity and duration were very common in Illinois hospitals:

- Over 80% of women reported receiving a formula gift pack.
- Greater than 60% reported that their infant used a pacifier in the hospital.

More information on this data analysis is available at the *Illinois Breastfeeding Blueprint: A Plan for Change*, <http://ilbreastfeedingblueprint.org/>. For information on training and technical assistance available to hospitals interested in implementing breastfeeding-promoting practices contact Samantha Schoenfelder, Health and Early Childhood Coordinator, *Healthy Places* at 312-573-7802 or sschoenfelder@childrensmemorial.org.

* The eight hospital practices included in this study map to the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative *Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding*, but do not match the Ten Steps exactly.