

# Breastfeeding in Maine (2016)

A DATA BRIEF FOR PUBLIC HEALTH & HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS



Breastfeeding is an effective approach to reducing lifelong risk for chronic disease.<sup>1</sup> It helps protect babies against asthma, type 2 diabetes and obesity. Breastfeeding also reduces the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) and protects babies from ear infections and pneumonia.

## Improving breastfeeding duration rates in Maine can support future health.

- In Maine, **87 percent** of infants born in 2013 were ever breastfed, up from **75 percent** in 2004<sup>2</sup> (Figure 1)

- Exclusively breastfed until 3 months:

1 in 2 infants



- Exclusively breastfed for 6 months:

1 in 3 infants



## Breastfeeding, Obesity & Diabetes

Research studies show that breastfeeding:

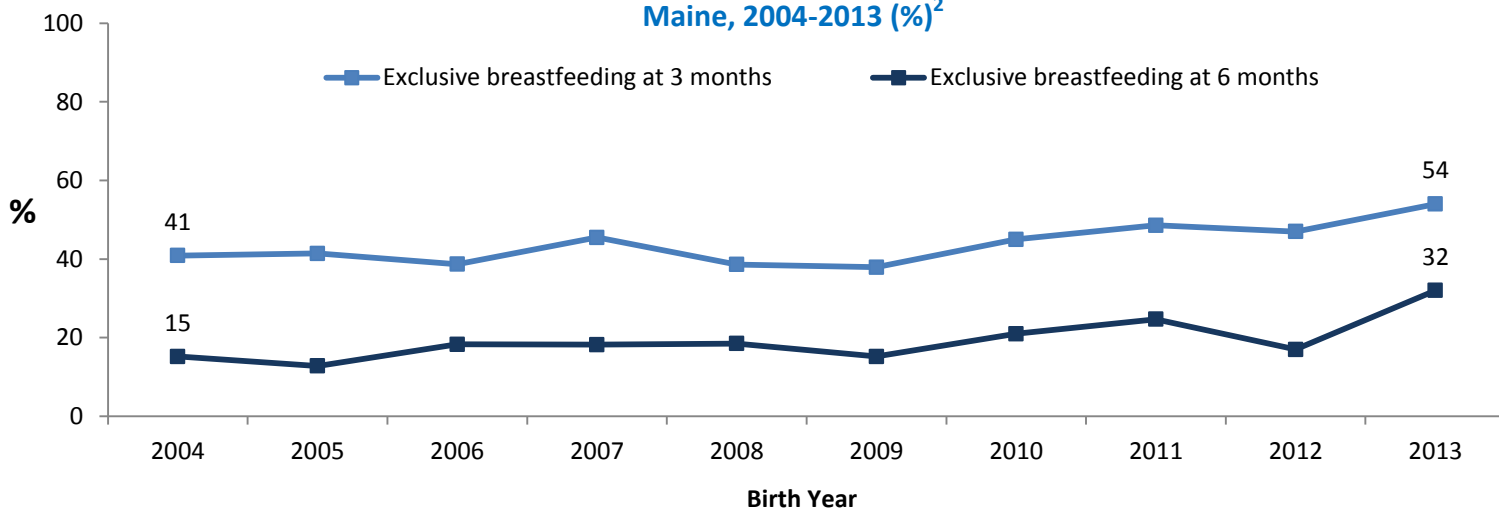
- Protects children against obesity and future type 1 and type 2 diabetes<sup>3,4</sup>
- Reduces the risk of maternal type 2 diabetes<sup>4</sup>

## Exclusive breastfeeding rates in Maine are better than U.S. rates, but there is still room for improvement.

- In 2013, **87 percent** of Maine infants were ever breastfed (similar to the U.S., 81 percent)<sup>5</sup>
- More Maine infants were exclusively breastfed at 3 months (**54 percent**) and 6 months (**32 percent**) than compared to the U.S. (44 percent at 3 months, 22 percent at 6 months)<sup>5</sup>

Figure 1. Breastfeeding Trends

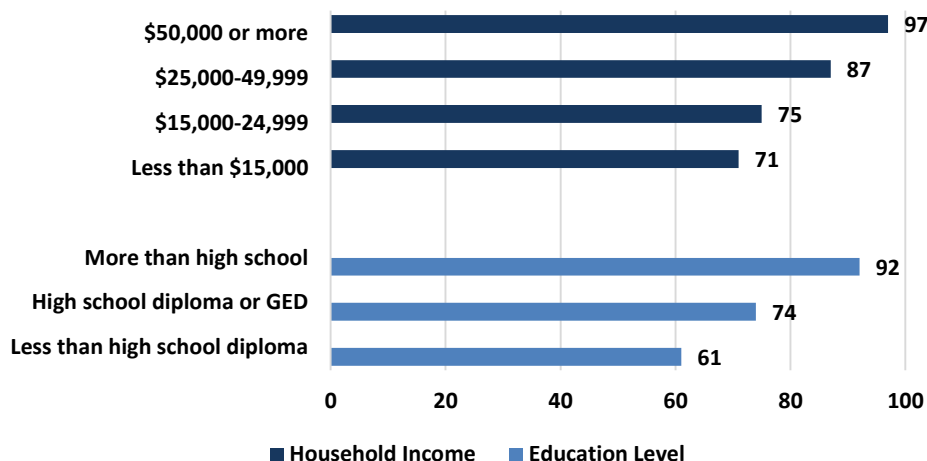
Maine, 2004-2013 (%)<sup>2</sup>



# Breastfeeding Disparities in Maine

- Mothers with an annual household income less than \$50,000 are significantly less likely to ever breastfeed than those with an annual household income greater than \$50,000<sup>6</sup> (Figure 2)
- Mothers with more than a high school education are significantly more likely to breastfeed than those with a high school or less than a high school education<sup>6</sup> (Figure 2)
- Mothers who are married are significantly more likely to breastfeed than those who are not married (90 vs 75 percent)<sup>6</sup>
- Mothers who have MaineCare are significantly less likely to ever breastfeed (73 percent) than mothers who do not have MaineCare (96 percent)<sup>6</sup>
- Mothers who are enrolled in WIC are significantly less likely to ever breastfeed (71 percent) than mothers who are not enrolled in WIC (92 percent)<sup>6</sup>

Figure 2. Ever Breastfed by Maternal Household Income and Education Level, 2012 (%)<sup>6</sup>



## Breastfeeding Recommendations

### The Academy of American Pediatrics recommends:

- babies be exclusively breastfed for their first 6 months,
- babies continue to breastfeed for a year, as long as mutually desired by the mother and baby,
- and breastfeeding be physician supported for as long as it is the right choice for mother and baby.<sup>7</sup>

### What Can You Do?

#### Providers can:

- Encourage pregnant women to breastfeed exclusively for the first six months
- Refer nursing mothers to a lactation consultant

#### All those who care for moms and babies can:

- Support [skin to skin](#) contact
- Promote [rooming in](#)
- Provide breastfeeding education

Sources: 1. Office on Women's Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, <http://www.womenshealth.gov/breastfeeding/index.html>. 2. 2001-2007 National Immunization Tables, 2008-2013 National Immunization Survey, [www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/data/nis-data/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/data/nis-data/index.htm). 3. <http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/childhood/causes.html>. 4. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/21348815>. 5. Center for Disease Control and Prevention National Immunization Survey, 2013 births. 6. Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System, 2012; statistically significant differences determined by non-overlapping 95% confidence intervals. 7. Academy of American Pediatrics, <https://www.2.aap.org/breastfeeding/faqsBreastfeeding.html>

**MAINE CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION, (207) 287-2273**  
[www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/population-health/hmp/panp/breastfeeding.html](http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/population-health/hmp/panp/breastfeeding.html)



Department of Health  
and Human Services

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