Breastfeeding is one of the most effective measures to prevent diseases among mothers and their infants. The American Academy of Pediatrics and the World Health Organization recommend that a mother exclusively breastfeed for at least six months. While 75% of mothers in the United States initiate breastfeeding, only 13% exclusively breastfeed at the end of six months. Additionally, research has shown that breastfeeding rates among African Americans/Blacks are significantly lower. However, women who reported giving birth in hospitals that supported breastfeeding were more likely to exclusively breastfeed at three months postpartum.

Among California women, Asians/Pacific Islanders, Whites, and Latinos reported higher rates of having ever breastfed than African Americans/Blacks (see Figure). African Americans/Blacks and Latinos reported the lowest rates of exclusive breastfeeding three months after delivery as compared to Whites and Asians/Pacific Islanders.

Among California Medi-Cal women, African Americans/Blacks reported the lowest rate of having ever breastfed. Also, African Americans/Blacks and Latinos reported the lowest rates of exclusive breastfeeding three months after delivery. Overall, women with Medi-Cal were slightly less likely to report having breastfed than Californians in general, with the exception of exclusive breastfeeding at three months among Asians/Pacific Islanders.


Link to Data Sources and Methods