

Breastfeeding

July 2009



Introduction

The Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS) is an ongoing surveillance system of maternal behavior and experiences before, during, and shortly after pregnancy.¹ This population-based survey is designed to collect data on maternal health and behavior, prenatal and postpartum care, and infant health. The 2004 and 2005 Florida PRAMS had a total of 5,705 respondents. The data presented in this fact sheet are weighted to be representative of new mothers and newborns in the state.

Background

Both babies and mothers gain many benefits from breastfeeding. Breast milk is easy to digest and contains antibodies that can protect infants from bacterial and viral infections. Premature babies do better when breastfed compared to premature babies who are fed formula. Research indicates that women who breastfeed may have lower rates of certain breast and ovarian cancers, and a lower risk of type 2 diabetes and postpartum depression.² This fact sheet examines the overall prevalence of breastfeeding among Florida new mothers, their reasons for not breastfeeding, and breastfeeding-related issues during postpartum hospital stays.

Results

Overall, 76% of Florida new mothers breastfed their babies; 63% of moms breastfed their babies one month or more; and 44% of moms breastfed their babies three months or more. (Figure 1)

Among the 24% of Florida new mothers who never breastfed, the most common reasons for not breastfeeding were that the mother:

- Did not like breastfeeding - 45%.
- Had other children to take care of - 22%.
- Went back to work or school - 21%.
- Wanted her body back to herself - 18%.
- Did not want to be tied down - 17%.
- Was sick or taking medicine - 15%.
- Had too many household duties - 14%.
- Was embarrassed to breastfeed - 6%.

Figure 1. Percentage of Breastfeeding, Florida, 2004 & 2005



Eight percent of Florida new mothers reported that someone suggested they not breastfeed. This suggestion came from:

- Mother, father, or in-laws - 29%.
- Friends - 26%.
- Baby's doctor, nurse, or other health-care worker - 22%.
- Other family member or relative - 20%.
- Their primary doctor, nurse, or other healthcare worker - 17%.
- Husbands or partners - 13%.
- Other - 15%.

Note: Mothers were allowed to check all that applied.

Breastfeeding-related indicators during postpartum hospital stays among new mothers in Florida show that:

- 91% received information about breastfeeding from hospital staff.
- 70% breastfed infants in the hospital.
- 43% breastfed within one hour after the baby was born in the hospital.
- 65% had help from hospital staff to learn to breast-feed.
- 34% fed their infant only breast milk in the hospital.
- 59% were told by hospital staff to breastfeed on demand.
- 88% received a gift pack containing formula from hospital staff.
- 76% were given a telephone number by hospital staff to ask for help with breastfeeding.

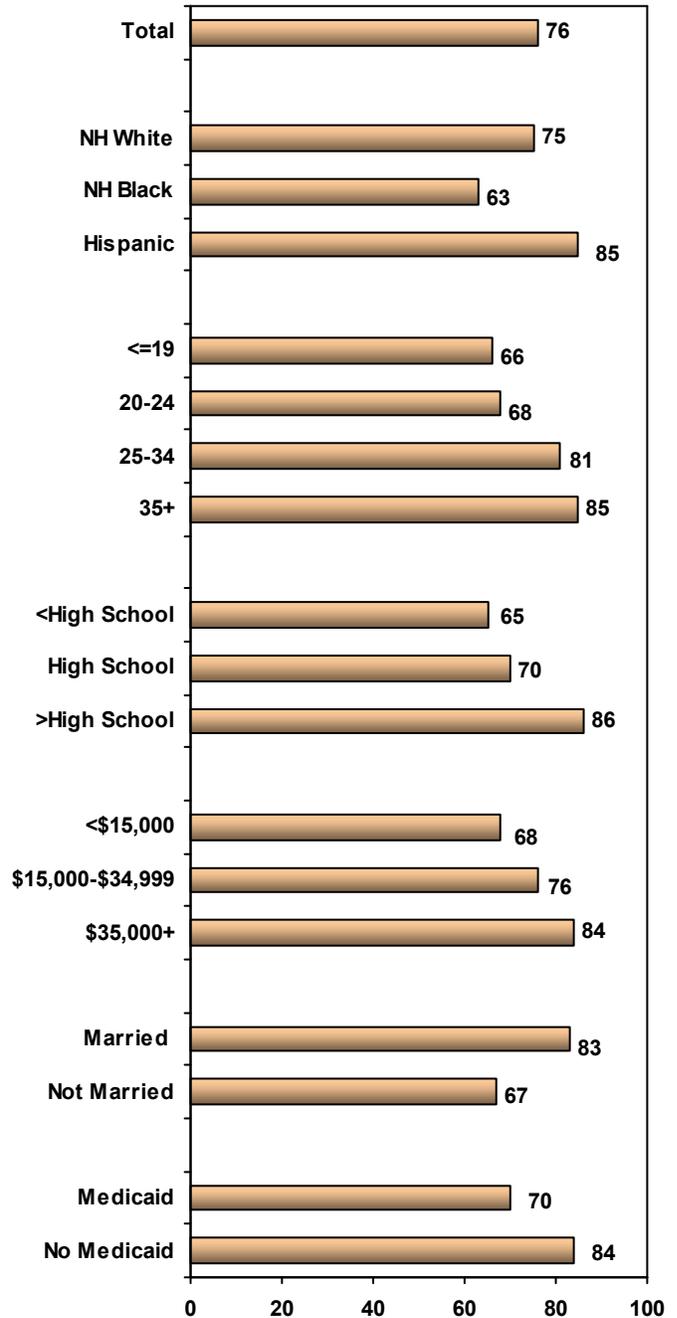
The prevalence of ever breastfeeding was:

- Significantly higher among Hispanics compared to non-Hispanic whites and non-Hispanic blacks.
- Significantly higher among women 25-years-old and older compared to women less than 25-years-old.
- Significantly higher among women with more than a high school education compared to women with less than a high school education.
- Significantly higher among women with an annual family income of \$35,000 or more per year compared to women with a family income of less than \$35,000.
- Significantly higher among married women compared to their unmarried counterparts.
- Significantly higher among women without Medicaid compared to women with Medicaid. (Figure 2)

Summary

- Seventy-six percent of Florida new mothers ever breastfed their babies and the prevalence was significantly higher among Hispanics, women 25-years-old and older, women with a high school education or more, women with an annual family income of \$35,000 or more, married women, and women without Medicaid.
- The most common reason given for not breastfeeding was that the mother did not like breastfeeding.

Figure 2. Prevalence of Ever Breastfeeding By Demographic Characteristics, Florida, 2004 & 2005



For more information, please contact:
 Division of Disease Control
 Bureau of Epidemiology
 4052 Bald Cypress Way Bin A-12
 Tallahassee, FL 32399-1720
 850-245-4401

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Selected Citations

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). *Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitor System Data*. Atlanta, Georgia: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2007.
2. <http://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding> (Access: July 13, 2009)