

Breastfeeding Rates Are on the Rise

Written by [Laurel Haring](#) Sunday, May 04 2008 13:43

Compared to 15 years ago, many more new mothers are choosing to breastfeed their babies. This is heartening news to supporters of breastfeeding. The statistics are pretty exciting. It may be that marketing campaigns or ob/gyn or pediatrician counseling are proving effective ... but another cause may be behind the growing numbers of nursing mothers. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [reports](#) that, compared to 15 years ago, the number of new mothers who breastfeed their infants during the first months of life has risen to 77%, a jump of 17%. Here are some of the breastfeeding statistics for women of:

- African descent increased from 36% to 65%
- Mexican descent increased from 67% to 80%
- European descent increased from 62% to 79%

Of low-income women, 57% choose to breastfeed. Of women younger than 20, 43% choose to breastfeed

So what can we take away from all this? Obviously, more women are trying breastfeeding. It doesn't sound like much, but it's an indication of how attitudes toward nursing are changing.

Once upon a time, all women nursed their infants. Later, the wealthy could afford to hire wet nurses to breastfeed their children. Later still, women chose to formula feed their infants, viewing nursing as something that would tie them down and ruin their figures.

During the last century, the "scientific method" of nourishing infants was touted as being better than the traditional method. You could measure out specific amounts of formula (which was marketed as being as good as, if not better than, breast milk for babies) and know exactly how much your baby had eaten. To this day, many of the growth charts in pediatrician's offices are based on the growth rates of formula-fed infants - and formula-fed infants tend to grow bigger, faster, than those that are breast-fed

The results of this study indicate that more women are willing to at least try nursing their babies. Rather than flat-out refusing to even consider the idea, which was much more prevalent a few decades ago, now new mothers are open to at least giving breastfeeding a chance.

When I was pregnant with my first child, I always responded with, "I'm going to try," when I was asked if I was going to breastfeed. I hear the same sentiment from first-time expectant mothers today. When I do, my response is always the same: "Even if you only nurse for just a little while, it's better than not nursing at all." And I always follow up by

telling the woman that if she really wants to nurse her baby, many people are out there who can help her make it happen ... including me.

If you're nursing or have nursed your children, consider making yourself available for advice and support if a friend - heck, even if she's just an acquaintance - sounds like she might like some reassurance or guidance when it comes to nursing her baby. One of the reasons I became a counselor with Nursing Mothers (a local mom-to-mom support group) was because of the tremendous support I received throughout my experiences with premature delivery, poor suck, pumping, nursing and working, biting, and weaning. You could call it payback, of sorts.

Type-A Mom offers the same sort of support to all kinds of moms for all kinds of situations. Maybe that's why I choose to write articles for this site. Maybe that's why you're here right now, reading this article.

Encouragement and support. Sometimes they're all it takes to make breastfeeding - and other aspects of parenting - successful.

About the Author

Laurel Haring is a writer. She lives with her family in Wilmington, Delaware, and posts semi-regularly to her blog, [Let Me Say This About That](#).

<http://www.typeamom.net/breastfeeding-rates-are-on-the-rise.html>