

# Breastfeeding and Breast Cancer

## Paths to Prevention:

### The California Breast Cancer Primary Prevention Plan

Breastfeeding protects mothers against all types of breast cancer, as it causes protective physiological changes in the breast. The longer one breastfeeds, the greater the protective benefit. However, social, cultural and economic factors discourage and prevent many mothers from breastfeeding.

For more information visit: [www.bcphp.org](http://www.bcphp.org)

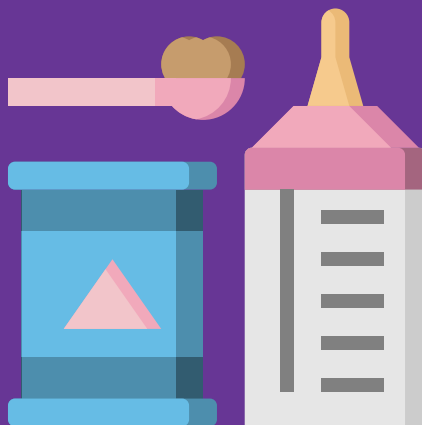
#### Duration Matters



Mothers who breastfeed the longest have more than  
**50% lower risk**  
of breast cancer  
than those who breastfeed for the least amount of time.

#### Adding Formula Reduces Benefits

Exclusive breastfeeding was found to reduce mother's cancer risk by 28% over mixed feeding both formula and breastmilk.



Breastfeeding, whether it was exclusive or part of mixed feeding, reduced breast cancer risk for both premenopausal women (14% lower risk) and postmenopausal women (11% lower risk).

#### Beginning Breastfeeding is Critical

Studies consistently show that never having breastfed is associated with a higher risk of breast cancer.

One major study found that women who breastfed had a 10% lower risk of hormone receptor negative breast cancer and 22% lower risk of triple-negative breast cancer among women who had given birth.

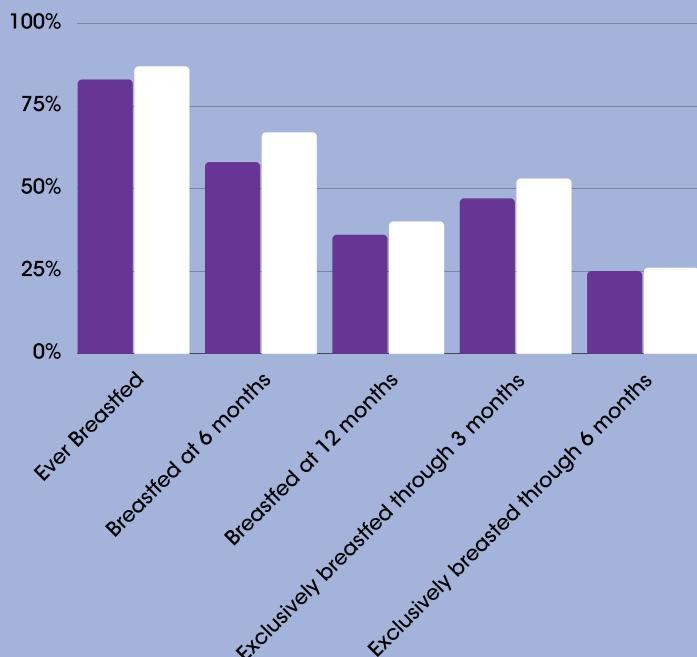


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Breastfeeding rates in California (white) exceed national rates (purple), but are far from optimal given the higher cancer risk among those who do not breastfeed at all or as long as their peers.



## Different Populations have Varying Breastfeeding Rates and Support Needs

Ways to support breastfeeding must account for the differing rates of breastfeeding among women belonging to various communities and the barriers they face to breastfeeding. Although this list is not exhaustive, particular attention should be paid to the needs of mothers in the following communities:

- **Women of color - with differing needs among various cultures and socio-economic groups**
- **LGBTQI and Gender Queer People**
- **Mothers with Disabilities**
- **Women in Jail, Prison, and Immigration Detention**
- **Young Mothers**
- **Low-Income Women**



## Interventions:

Community leaders, businesses, policymakers, friends and family members can all act to support women who choose to breastfeed:

- Launch public education campaigns that promote breastfeeding and provide information on its health benefits for both child and mother
- Implement supportive policies (like paid leave and more comprehensive medical plans) for pregnant women and new mothers
- Create breastfeeding-supportive workplaces for all workers
- Improve breastfeeding-supportive practices in health care facilities
- Increase maternal access to support for breastfeeding, including after birth

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