OCTOBER 2015

CDC Vitalsigns™

Hospital Actions Affect Breastfeeding

Hospital practices in the first hours and days after birth make the difference in whether and how long babies are breastfed. The WHO/UNICEF Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative is the global standard for hospital care to support breastfeeding, with the Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding at its core. The percentage of US hospitals implementing a majority of the Ten Steps increased from about 29% in 2007 to nearly 54% in 2013. However, of approximately 3,300 maternity hospitals in the US, only 289 are designated Baby-Friendly. Hospitals influence how the nearly 4 million US babies born each year are fed. Further improvement in hospital practices could increase breastfeeding rates and contribute to better child health.

Hospitals can:

- Implement the Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding and work towards achieving Baby-Friendly designation.
- Use CDC's Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care (mPINC) survey customized reports to improve maternity care practices that support breastfeeding.
- Work with doctors, nurses, lactation care providers, and organizations to create networks that provide clinic-based, at-home, or community breastfeeding support for mothers.

80%

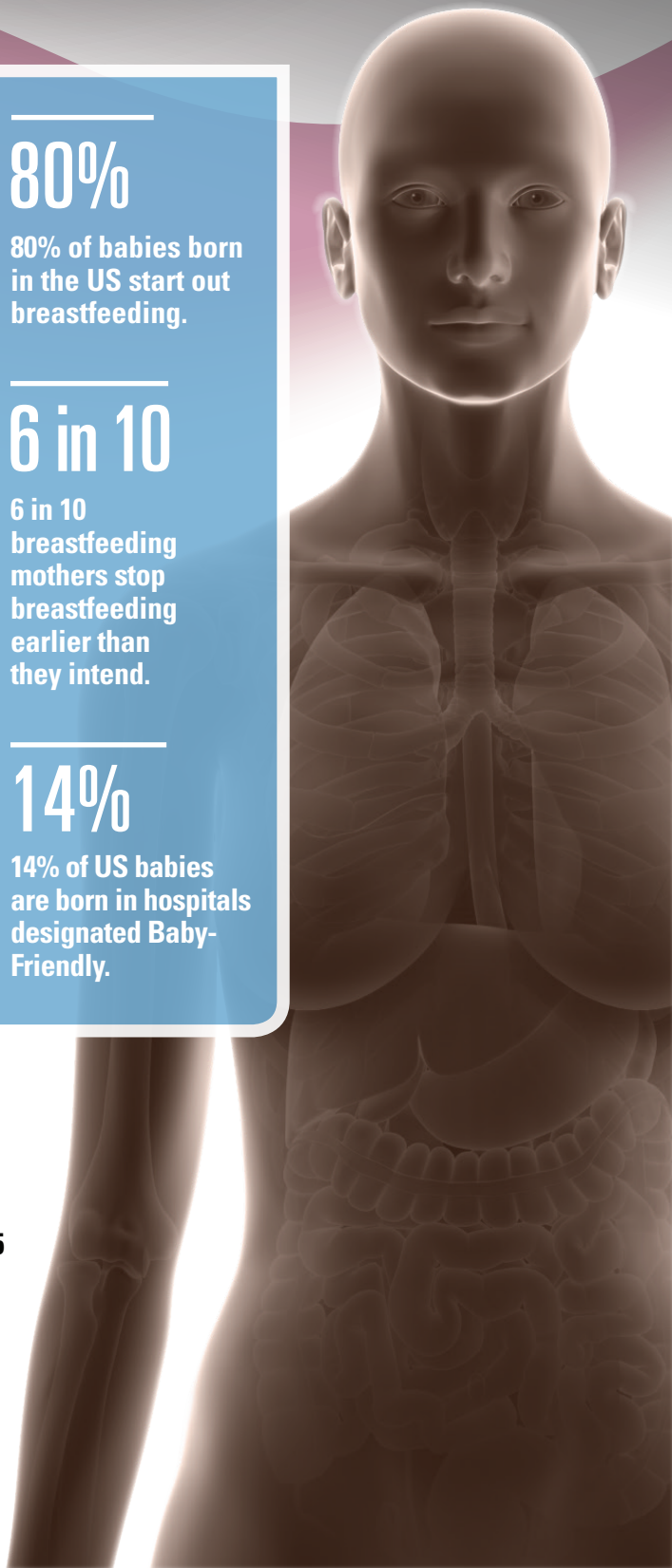
80% of babies born in the US start out breastfeeding.

6 in 10

6 in 10 breastfeeding mothers stop breastfeeding earlier than they intend.

14%

14% of US babies are born in hospitals designated Baby-Friendly.



Want to learn more? **www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/breastfeeding2015**

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion

Problem:

Practices in many US hospitals do not fully support breastfeeding

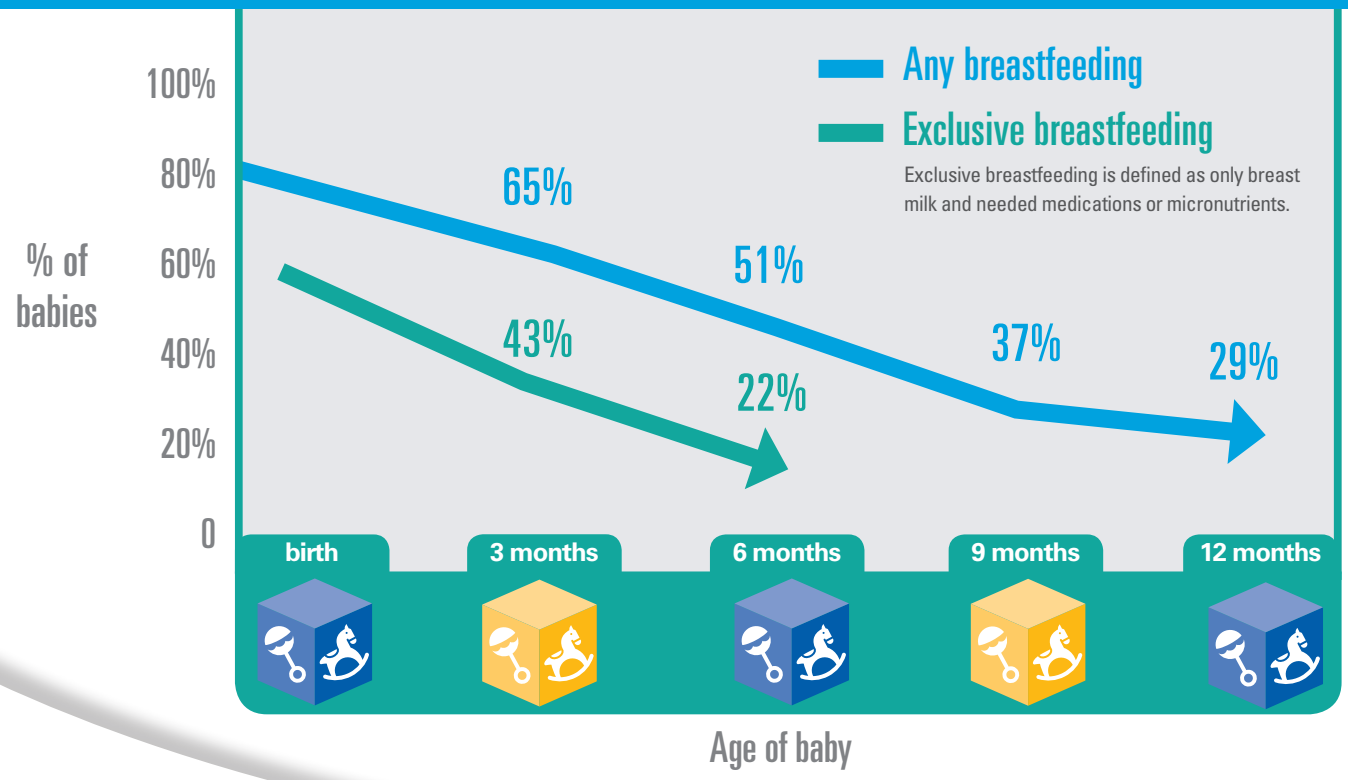
Some of the Ten Steps on which hospitals fell shortest in 2013 included:

- Just 26% of hospitals had a model breastfeeding policy (Step 1).
- Only 26% of hospitals did not routinely feed formula to healthy, breastfed infants when there was no medical reason to do so (Step 6).
- Less than half (45%) of hospitals kept mothers and babies together throughout the entire hospital stay, which provides opportunities to breastfeed and helps mothers learn feeding cues (Step 7).
- Just 32% of hospitals provided enough support for breastfeeding mothers when they left the hospital (Step 10).

Not enough babies are breastfeeding as recommended:

- Only 22% of babies are exclusively breastfed for 6 months as recommended.
- Only 29% are breastfed for 12 months as recommended.
- Babies who are breastfed have reduced risks of ear and respiratory infections, asthma, sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), diabetes, and obesity.

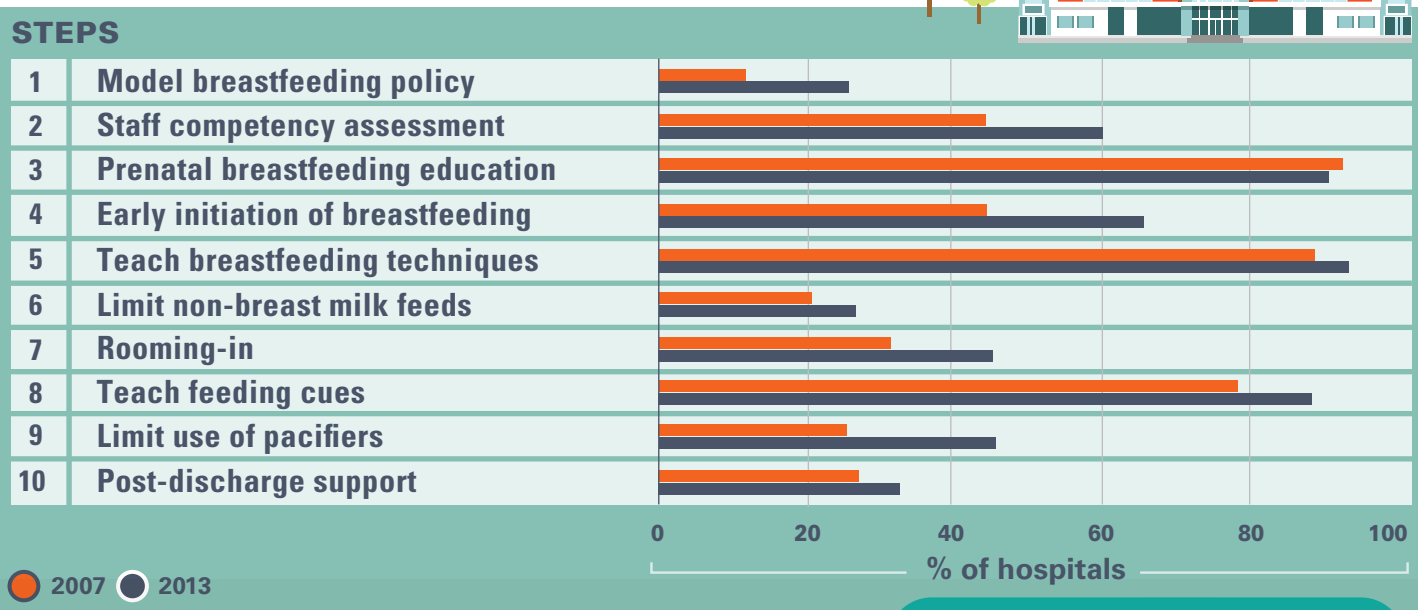
Percentage of babies breastfeeding during the first year



SOURCE: CDC's National Immunization Survey, among babies born in 2012.

However…hospitals are making progress on the Ten Steps

Percentage of hospitals using the Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding



SOURCE: CDC's Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Survey.

Hospital Successes

89 hospitals
in 29 states

With CDC support, the Best Fed Beginnings program helped 89 hospitals in 29 states work towards Baby-Friendly status. As of August 2015, 50 of these hospitals were designated. The other 39 hospitals reached the final phase of designation.

13 hospitals
in Indian Country

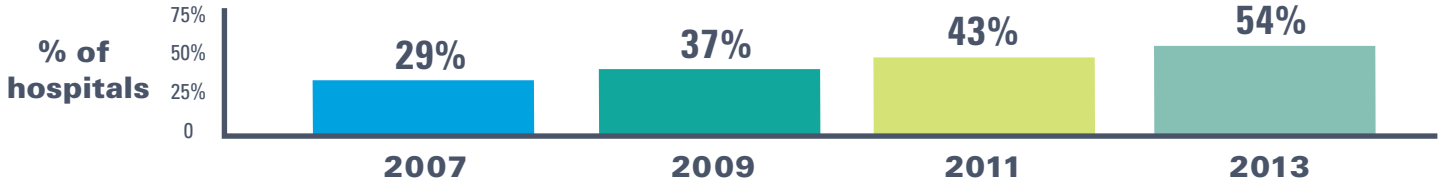
Since the Indian Health Service (IHS) launched its Baby-Friendly hospital effort in 2011, all 13 Federal IHS hospitals have achieved Baby-Friendly status.

SOURCE: Vital Signs, September 2015.

Percentage of US babies born in Baby-Friendly hospitals increased from 1% in 2005 to 14% in 2015.

SOURCE: CDC and Baby-Friendly, USA.

More hospitals are using a majority of the Ten Steps



SOURCE: CDC's Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Survey.

What Can Be Done?

The Federal government is

- Helping hospitals become designated as Baby-Friendly through funding and technical assistance.
- Supporting state health departments to help hospitals improve maternity care practices.
- Tracking hospital policies and practices that support breastfeeding using CDC's Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care (mPINC) survey to evaluate federal, state and local efforts.
  www.cdc.gov/mpinc
- Making breastfeeding counseling and supplies available to families with no out-of-pocket costs through a health insurance plan provision of the Affordable Care Act.

States and local government can

- Adopt standards for hospitals to support breastfeeding.
- Help hospitals implement the Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding.
  www.babyfriendlyusa.org/about-us/baby-friendly-hospital-initiative/the-ten-steps
- Help hospitals connect mothers to community programs for support once they leave the hospital.

Hospitals can

- Implement the Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding and work towards achieving Baby-Friendly designation.
- Use CDC's Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care (mPINC) survey customized reports to improve maternity care practices that support breastfeeding.
- Work with doctors, nurses, lactation care providers, and organizations to create networks that provide clinic-based, at-home, or community breastfeeding support for mothers.

Healthcare providers can

- Help write hospital policies that support mothers and babies to breastfeed.
- Counsel mothers on breastfeeding during prenatal visits.
- Include lactation care providers and other breastfeeding experts on patient care teams.
- Support breastfeeding in the hospital and at well-baby visits.

Mothers and their families can

- Talk to their healthcare providers about breastfeeding plans, and ask about how to get help with breastfeeding.
- Ask about breastfeeding support practices and Baby-Friendly designation when choosing a maternity hospital.
- Join with other community members to encourage local hospitals to improve breastfeeding support and become Baby-Friendly.

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