

IN SUMMARY: Patterns of Breastfeeding Among Illinois Women

The pattern of breastfeeding over time among Illinois women differs by race/ethnicity.

Almost **half** of the Black women giving birth each year in Illinois, or approximately 13,000 mothers, never breastfeed their babies. To meet the 2020 *Healthy People* objective for breastfeeding initiation, we need to ensure that around **6,000** more black women start breastfeeding their babies each year.

The first two weeks after birth is critical for establishing breastfeeding regardless of race/ethnicity. A small but important percentage of white, black, Hispanic, and Asian mothers in Illinois stop breastfeeding very soon after they start.

While no group of new mothers in Illinois is meeting the *Healthy People* objective for exclusive breastfeeding at 3 months (12 weeks), black and Hispanic women are much farther from this goal than white and Asian women. Just over 1 in 10 black women and fewer than 2 in 10 Hispanic women are exclusively breastfeeding when their babies are 12 weeks old. About 3 in 10 white and Asian mothers are **exclusively** breastfeeding 12 weeks after giving birth.

Figure 17. The Breastfeeding Experience of Illinois Women, Whose Infants Were Born in 2008
Overall and By Race/Ethnicity

