

CDC Vital Signs

Hospital Actions Affect Breastfeeding

This program is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding is the center of the WHO/UNICEF Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative, the global standard for hospital care to support breastfeeding. A recent CDC report found that hospitals in the U.S. are using more of the Ten Steps. Since nearly all U.S. babies are born in hospitals, getting off to a good start there is important. However, only 14 percent of babies are born in hospitals designated as “Baby-Friendly.”

Babies who are breastfed have a lower risk for asthma, obesity, and certain infections, and mothers who breastfeed decrease their chances of breast and ovarian cancer and diabetes. Hospitals can keep mothers and babies together, make sure that moms who want to breastfeed start within an hour of birth, and use the Ten Steps to work toward getting the “Baby-Friendly” designation.

To learn more, visit cdc.gov/vitalsigns.

For the most accurate health information, visit www.cdc.gov or call 1-800-CDC-INFO.