

# Breastfeeding

## Why Is This Important?

Breastmilk is internationally recognized as the optimal food for babies. The WHO and Health Canada recommend exclusive breastfeeding until infants are 6 months of age. Thereafter, they should be given nutritious complementary foods and continue breastfeeding up to the age of two years or beyond. Evidence shows that children who are breastfed have improved short and long term health outcomes.

## What Is Being Done?

[Saskatoon Health Region Breastfeeding Centre](#), [Breastfeeding Café](#) and [Breastfeeding Policy](#)

[Baby Friendly Initiative](#)

Saskatoon [Breastfeeding Matters](#)

Saskatoon [Mothers' Centre](#)

## To Learn More:

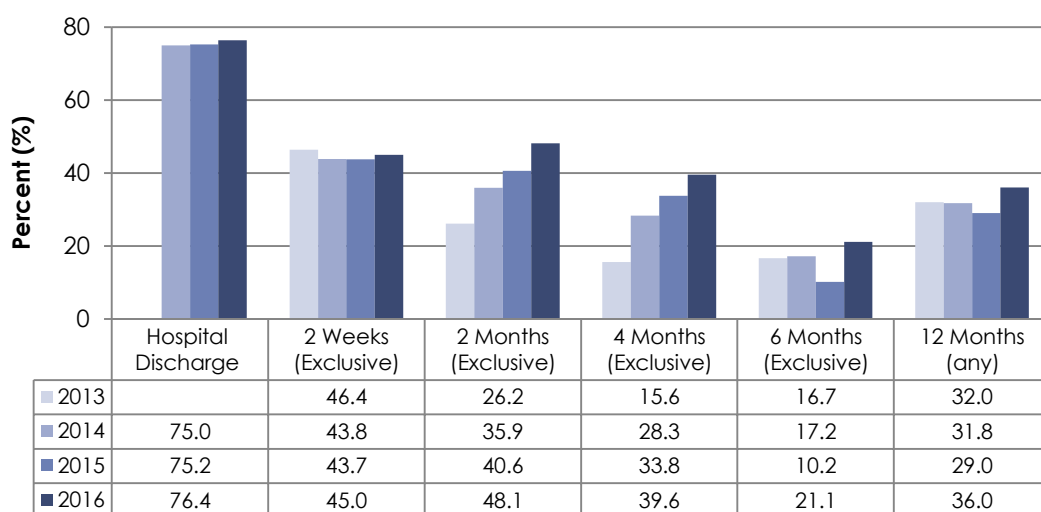
Chief Medical Health Officer's [Call to Action](#)

## Highlights

### Exclusive breastfeeding rates have been increasing over time.

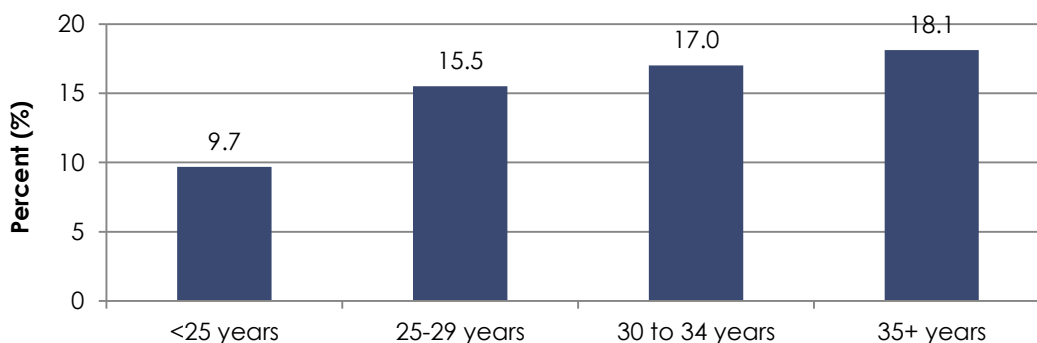
- Approximately 1 in 5 mothers were exclusively breastfeeding when their infant was six months of age in 2016. The rate of exclusive breastfeeding declined as the infant progressed in age from hospital discharge (76.4%) to six months (21.1%) in 2016 (Figure 1).
- Less than 10% of those mothers younger than 25 years of age were exclusively breastfeeding at 6 months. This pattern of younger mothers breastfeeding less than older mothers exists at each time period of the baby's life (data not shown (Figure 2)).
- Breastfeeding rates vary by sub-group. Click [here](#) to see breastfeeding rates by socio-economic status, rural residence and immigration.

**Figure 1: Percent of Mothers Breastfeeding from Birth (Hospital Discharge) to 12 months, Saskatoon Health Region, 2013 to 2016**



Source: Hospital discharge data from Healthy and Home; all other data from Population and Public Health, Saskatoon Health Region

**Figure 2: Percent of Mothers Exclusively Breastfeeding at 6 Months of Age, by Mothers Age Group, Saskatoon Health Region, 2013 to 2016**



Source: Population and Public Health, Saskatoon Health Region