

Study: Breastfeeding Trends in Canada, 2003 and 2011/2012

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Almost 9 in 10 Canadian mothers initiated breastfeeding soon after their child's birth in 2011/2012.

Health Canada and its partners encourage mothers to breastfeed their infants exclusively (no other liquids or solids) for the first six months. In 2011/2012, 26% of mothers breastfed exclusively for six months (or more), up from 17% in 2003.

British Columbia had the highest rate of breastfeeding exclusively for six months (or more), as well as the largest provincial increase since 2003.

In 2011/2012, mothers who breastfed exclusively for six months (or more) tended to be in their thirties or older and had postsecondary qualifications. The most common reasons cited for stopping breastfeeding before six months were "not enough breast milk" and "difficulty with breastfeeding technique."

Note to readers

This release presents data from the 2003 and 2011/2012 cycles of the Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS). This survey gathers data on more than 30 health indicators. These include perceived health, smoking, second-hand smoke at home, access to a regular medical doctor, physical activity during leisure time, obesity, high blood pressure, drinking, fruit and vegetable consumption, diabetes, asthma, arthritis and life stress.

The CCHS is an ongoing survey that collects a wide range of information about the health status of Canadians, factors determining their health status and their use of health care services.

Residents of Indian reserves, health care institutions, some remote areas and full-time members of the Canadian Forces were excluded.

Available in CANSIM: table 105-0502.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 3226.

For more statistics and analysis on the health of Canadians and the health care system, visit the *Health in Canada* module. This module is accessible from our homepage, under *Features*.

The article "Breastfeeding trends in Canada," in *Health at a Glance* (82-624-X), is now available from the *Browse by key resource* module of our website under *Publications*.

You can also access the companion CANSIM tables through the latest electronic issue of *Health Indicators* (82-221-X), on the *Other related data* page.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; infostats@statcan.gc.ca) or Media Relations (613-951-4636; mediahotline@statcan.gc.ca).

