

Pregnancy and neonates: breastfeeding 48 hours

NICE indicator

Published: 1 August 2014

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Indicator

The percentage of mothers who give their babies breast milk in the first 48 hours after delivery.

Indicator type

Network / system level indicator.

The indicator would be appropriate to understand and report on the performance of networks or systems of providers.

This document does not represent formal NICE guidance. For a full list of NICE indicators, see our [menu of indicators](#).

To find out how to use indicators and how we develop them, see our [NICE indicator process guide](#).

Rationale

The evidence around the benefits of breastfeeding for both mother and baby is well established. [NICE's guideline on postnatal care](#) recommends pregnant women should be given information and support to encourage breastfeeding once the baby is born.

Source guidance

- [Maternal and child nutrition: nutrition and weight management in pregnancy, and nutrition in children up to 5 years. NICE guideline NG247 \(2025\)](#), recommendation 1.3.1
- [Antenatal care. NICE guideline NG201 \(2021\)](#), recommendations 1.3.15 and 1.3.20
- [Postnatal care. NICE guideline NG194 \(2021\)](#), recommendations 1.5.2, 1.5.9, 1.5.12 and 1.5.14

Specification

Numerator: The number of mothers who initiate breastfeeding in the first 48 hours after delivery.

Denominator: The total number of maternities.

Calculation: Numerator divided by the denominator, multiplied by 100.

Exclusions: Maternities without a live birth.

Data source: [Public Health England's public health profiles](#).

Minimum population: The indicator would be appropriate to assess the performance of

networks or systems of providers.

Update information

Minor changes since publication

January 2025: The source guidance was updated following the publication of NICE's guideline on maternal and child nutrition: nutrition and weight management in pregnancy, and nutrition in children up to 5 years.

ISBN: 978-1-4731-5530-5