



## New Breastfeeding Push at Hospitals

Hospitals, Birth Centers Could Do More to Promote Breastfeeding, Says CDC

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June 12, 2008 -- Hospitals and birth centers could go further in promoting breastfeeding, the CDC reports.

In a new CDC survey, most hospitals and birth centers -- 88% -- say they teach most new moms breastfeeding techniques.

But the survey -- completed by more than 2,600 hospitals and birth centers in the 50 states, Puerto Rico, and Washington, D.C. -- also shows room for improvement.

For instance, 24% of the facilities reported routinely giving other drinks (such as sugar water) to more than half of healthy, full-term newborns. And 70% of the facilities reported sending breastfeeding moms home with samples of infant formula. Those practices aren't supportive of breastfeeding, notes the CDC.

The survey results also show that although 95% of the facilities gave new moms a hotline number to call for breastfeeding advice when they went home, only 56% reported calling new moms to see how they were doing with their breastfeeding.

"These findings underscore the importance of improving the way hospitals and birth centers provide assistance, encouragement, and support for breastfeeding," Laurence Grummer-Strawn, PhD, chief of the nutrition branch in the CDC's division of nutrition, physical activity, and obesity, says in a CDC news release.

Facilities in the western and northeastern U.S. were better about that than southern facilities, and birth centers fared slightly better than hospitals.

The findings appear in the CDC's *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*.

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SOURCES: CDC, *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, June 13, 2008; vol 57: pp 621-625. News release, CDC.

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