

## Statistics on Breastfeeding 2014

Since 2004, breastfeeding has decreased in Sweden, but since 2010 the rate of breastfeeding during the first six months has equalized. The regional differences are large. The rate of breastfeeding at four months of age was the highest in the counties of Uppsala and Stockholm and the lowest in Gävleborg och Västmanland.

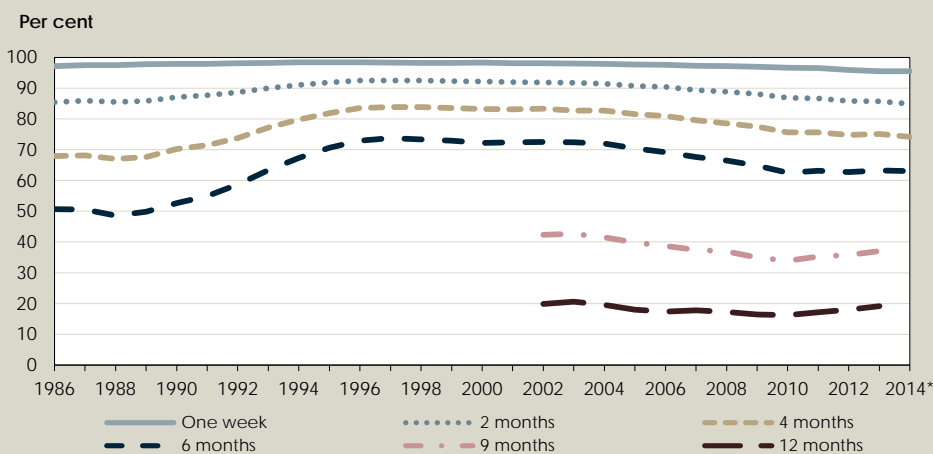
### Breastfeeding rate at the same level during the first six months

The breastfeeding rate in Sweden reached its peak during the period 1995–2003 where more than 83 per cent of all children were breastfed at four months, and just over 72 per cent at six months of age. Breastfeeding decreased in the subsequent years but since 2010 the rate has evened out at approximately 60 per cent. In the year 2014, the breastfeeding rate was 74 per cent for children four months of age and 63 per cent for six months old children.

Breastfeeding at nine and twelve months has increased slightly since 2010. Data for 2014 is missing at national level (Figure 1).

Results from a register-based study from 2014 show no clear trend for decreasing breastfeeding rate in any particular group of mothers. Variables studied included maternal education, income and country of birth [1].

Figure 1. Exclusively and partially breastfed infants born 1986–2014



\*Estimated national values for 2013–2014. No national data is presented for breast feeding at 9 or 12 months in 2014 due to poor quality

Note. Data on breastfeeding at 9 and 12 months of age started in 2002

Source: Statistics on breastfeeding, The National Board of Health and Welfare

### Definitions

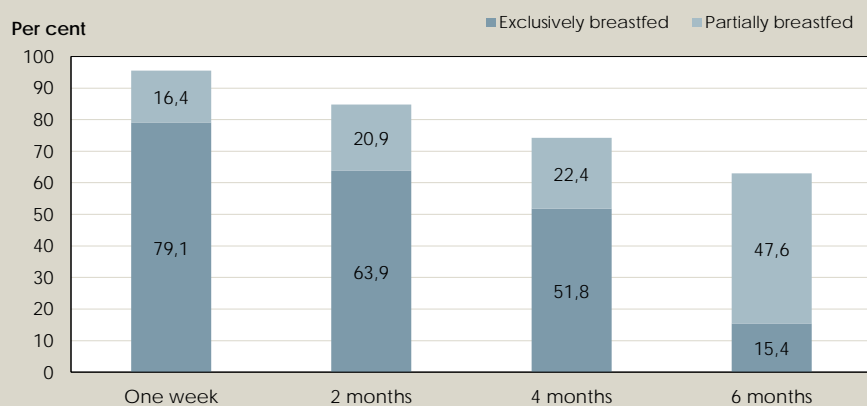
*Exclusively breastfed* is defined as when the infant has received only breastmilk, and no other liquids or solids, with the exception of drops or syrups of vitamins, mineral supplements or medicines.

*Partially breastfed* is defined as when the infant has received some breast-milk but is also being given other food or food-based fluids, such as formula milk or weaning foods.

## About half of the children are exclusively breastfed at four months of age

Exclusive breastfeeding decreases and partial breastfeeding increases with the children's age. The main reason is introduction of solid foods or that parent's supplement breastfeeding with breast-milk substitute. At one week of age 96 per cent of the newborns were exclusively or partially breastfed, and when the child was six months 63 per cent were breastfed (Figure 2).

**Figure 2. Exclusively and partially breastfed infants by age. Infants born, 2014**



Estimated national values for 2014

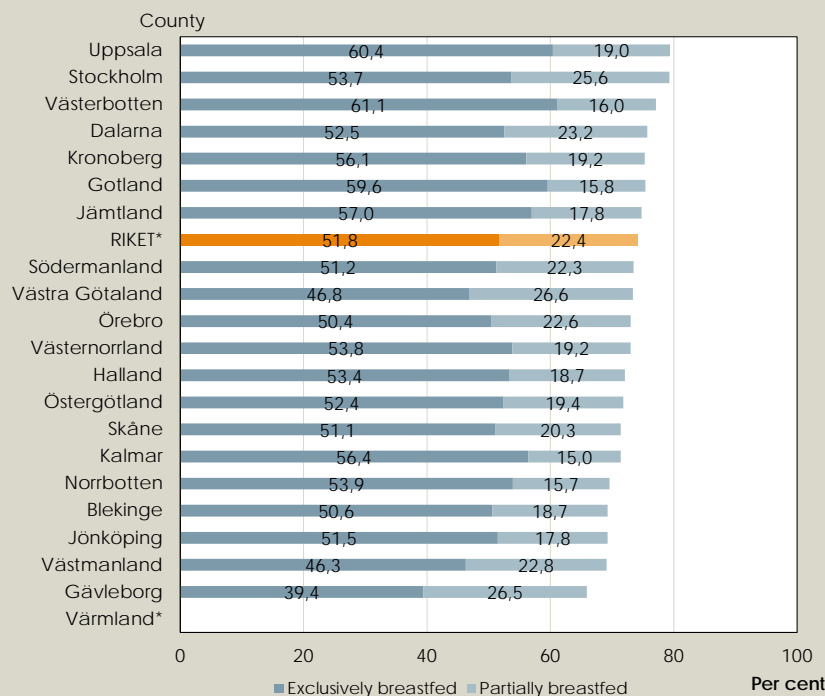
No national data is presented for breast feeding at 9 or 12 months due to poor quality

Source: Statistics on breastfeeding, The National Board of Health and Welfare

## Large regional differences

The highest total breastfeeding rate at four months of age was found in the counties of Uppsala and Stockholm (79 per cent) in 2014. The counties of Gävleborg and Västmanland had the lowest breastfeeding rates this year (66 and 69 per cent, respectively). Looking at only the exclusively breastfed, Uppsala and Västerbotten were in the top (61 per cent). The national rate was 52 per cent (Figure 3).

**Figure 3. Proportion of children who were breastfed at 4 months, infants born 2014**



\*Estimated national values for 2014 since data is missing from Värmland  
Source: Statistics on breastfeeding, The National Board of Health and Welfare

## Recommendations

Until 2002, the WHO recommended exclusive breastfeeding of children up to four to six months of age. Thereafter, the recommendation was adjusted to exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months, and then continued breastfeeding with complementary foods for two years or longer (5). Sweden has decided to follow the recommendation of exclusive breastfeeding for six months and then continued breastfeeding with complementary foods in sufficient amounts, preferably during the first year of life, or as long as parents and children want to.

## Health benefits

Studies have shown that breastfeeding offers health benefits for both mother and child. Breastfed children are at a lower risk of infections such as acute otitis, gastroenteritis and respiratory tract infections. It is also shown that breastfeeding can reduce the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) and later in life increase protection from obesity and diabetes. Women who have breastfed also receive health benefits through a somewhat reduced risk of developing breast and ovarian cancer and diabetes type 2 [2–6].

### About the statistics on breastfeeding

The data on breastfeeding is collected from the paediatric health care that approximately 99 per cent of parents to newborn visit.

*Quality aspects:* for the year 2013 data from the county of Värmland is missing and Stockholm reported insufficient data. Uppsala does no longer register breastfeeding rates at nine months. National values are estimates.

Data for the year 2014 is still missing from Värmland and Stockholm left insufficient data for breastfeeding rates at nine and twelve months. For Uppsala and Örebro County, there is no statistics for nine months of age. National values for nine and twelve months are not presented 2014.

## References

1. Har sociodemografin betydelse för amningsfrekvensen? Socialstyrelsen, 2014.
2. Horta L et al. Long-term effects of breastfeeding. A systematic review. WHO, 2013.
3. Hörnell et al. Breastfeeding, introduction of other foods and effects on health: a systematic literature review for the 5th Nordic Nutrition Recommendations. Food and Nutr Research, 2013.
4. Ip et al. Breastfeeding and maternal and infant health outcomes in developed countries. Evidence Report Technology Assess. The Cochrane Collaboration Library, 2007.
5. Minska risken för plötslig spädbarnsdöd. En vägledning för hälso- och sjukvårdspersonal. Socialstyrelsen, 2014.
6. WHO U. Global Strategy for Infant Feeding & Young Child Feeding. Geneva: World Health Organization, 2003.

### More information

You can find more tables, graphs and information in the following Excel file (in Swedish, but with English list of terms):

[www.socialstyrelsen.se/publikationer2016/2016-9-20](http://www.socialstyrelsen.se/publikationer2016/2016-9-20)

If you want to use our statistical database (in Swedish):

<http://www.socialstyrelsen.se/statistik/statistikdatabas/amning>

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