

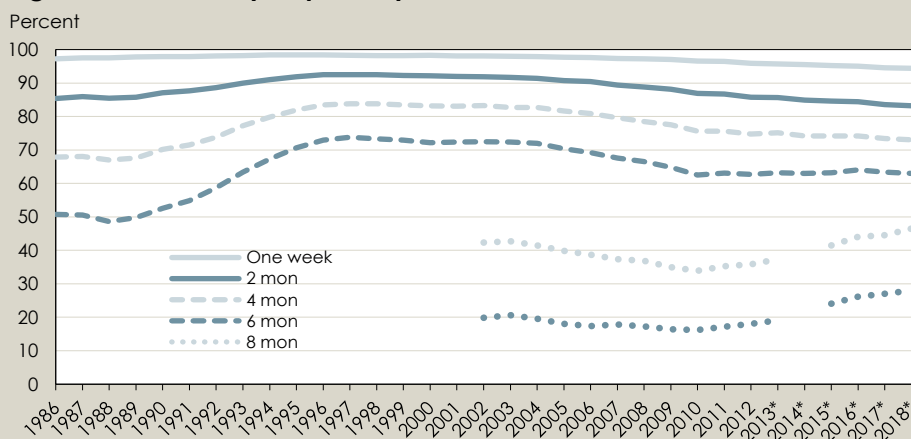
# Statistics on breastfeeding 2018

**Breastfeeding during the infant's first months continues to decrease slightly, while the proportion of infants who are breastfed at the age of six months has remained largely unchanged since 2010. However, it is becoming increasingly common for infants to be breastfed at the age of eight and twelve months. The regional differences in the proportion of breastfed are most pronounced among infants aged six months and above.**

## Breastfeeding of eight- and twelve-months-old infants is increasing

In terms of the last thirty years, the proportion of infants in Sweden who are breastfed has been highest during the period of 1995–2004 (Figure 1). At that time, about 83 percent of all infants were breastfed at four months of age and around 72 percent at six months of age. Thereafter, the proportion of breastfed infants decreased for a few years. Since 2010, the proportion of breastfed six-month-olds has remained stable around 63 percent. For infants younger than six months, the proportion has continued to decline slightly even in recent years. In 2018, 94 percent of infants were breastfed at one week of age, 83 percent at two months of age, 83 percent at four months of age and 73 percent at six months of age.

**Figure 1. Exclusively or partially breastfed infants born 1986–2018**



\*National values for 2013–2018 are estimated, since data is missing for some counties. Data on breastfeeding at the age of 8 and 12 months started in 2002. No figures are presented for 2014 due to lack of data quality.

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

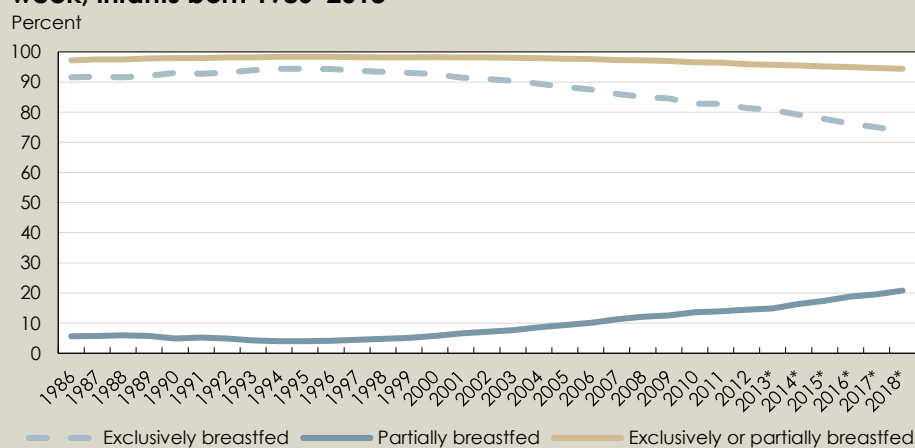
On the other hand, breastfeeding of infants older than six months has increased slightly since 2010. Among eight-month-old infants, the proportion of breastfed has increased from 34 percent in 2010 to 47 percent in 2018. For twelve-month-old infants, the proportion has increased from 16 percent to 28 percent during the

same period. At that age, almost all breastfeeding infants also receive other types of food.

## Exclusive breastfeeding of newborns is decreasing

The proportion of infants who are exclusively breastfed at one week of age has decreased gradually in the last twenty years. At the end of the 1990s, around 93 percent of infants were exclusively breastfed, and in 2018 the corresponding figure was 74 percent. During the same period, the proportion of infants who were partially breastfed increased, from five percent to 21 percent. Overall, the number of infants who are breastfed, either exclusively or partially, has decreased slightly during the period, from 98 percent in 1998 to 94 percent in 2018 (see figure 2).

**Figure 2. Proportion of infants who were breastfed at the age of one week, infants born 1986–2018**



\* Estimated national values for 2013–2018 due to missing data for some counties

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

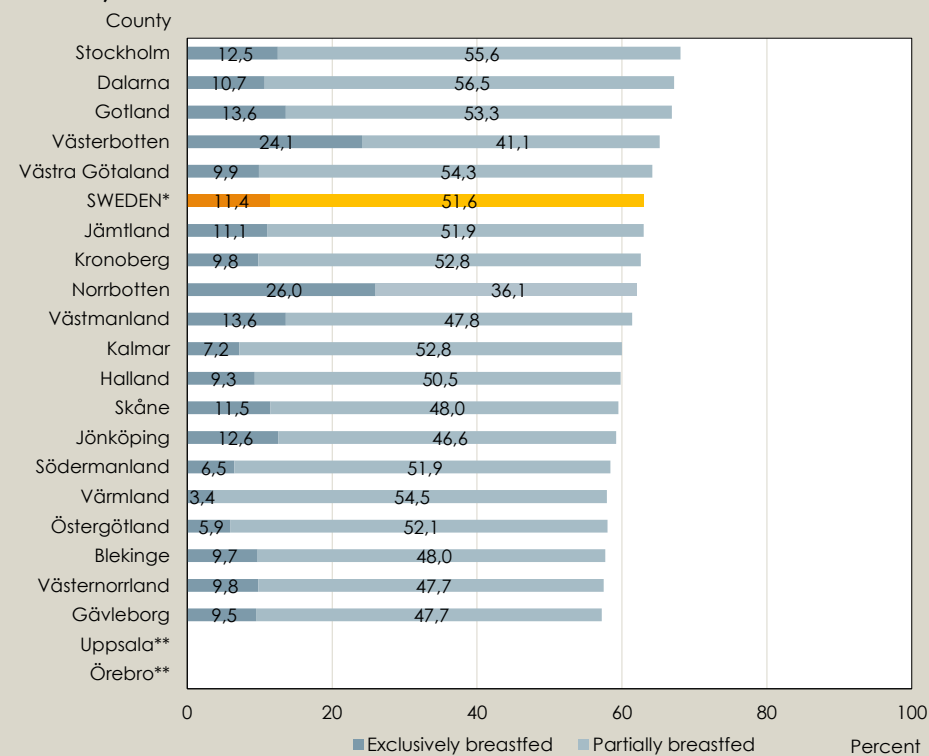
There has been a similar reduction in exclusive breastfeeding among two months old infants in the last twenty years, while partial breastfeeding has increased. Also in this age group, the proportion of infants who were breastfed, exclusively or partially, has declined slightly during the same period.

## Proportion of breastfed varies between counties

The differences between counties regarding breastfeeding are relatively small when it comes to the youngest infants. The proportion of infants who were breastfed at one week of age, exclusively or partially, varied in 2018 between 96 percent in the county of Gotland and 92 percent in the county of Södermanland. At six months of age, the differences between the counties were larger (figure 3).

The county of Stockholm had the highest proportion of infants who were breastfed, 68 percent, compared to the county of Gävleborg where 57 percent of the infants were breastfed. There is no data available for 2018 for the counties of Uppsala and Örebro, therefore they are not included in the comparison.

**Figure 3. Proportion of infants who were breastfed at the age of six months, infants born 2018**



\* Estimated value due to missing data for some counties

\*\* Missing data for the counties of Uppsala and Örebro

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

**Definitions**

*Exclusively breastfed* refers to infants who have been fed only breastmilk and vitamins (e.g. vitamin D) or medicines

*Partially breastfed* refers infants who, apart from breastmilk, have also received infant formula, formula or other food.

*Breastfeeding* refers to both infants who are exclusively breastfed and infants who are partially breastfed.

**New definition from the year 2004**

The current definition has been in effect since 2004 and is in accordance with the recommendations issued by the WHO. Before 2004, children who were given small samples of other food in addition to breast milk were also included in the category *exclusively breastfed*. Statistics concerning exclusive and partial breastfeeding are therefore not completely comparable to years before 2004

**More information**

You can find more tables, diagrams and other information in the Excel file: [www.socialstyrelsen.se/en/statistics-and-data/statistics/](http://www.socialstyrelsen.se/en/statistics-and-data/statistics/)

If you want to use our statistical database (in Swedish):  
[https://sdb.socialstyrelsen.se/if\\_amn/](https://sdb.socialstyrelsen.se/if_amn/)

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