



Commissioning Infant Feeding Services Part 1

Ensuring every child has the Best Start in Life is one of PHE's national priorities¹

Breastfeeding is an important public health priority

Supporting families to breastfeed and increasing the number of babies who are breastfed gives babies the best possible start

This resource has been developed in partnership between PHE and Unicef UK and is to be read in conjunction with parts 2 and 3



Breastfeeding in England

The UK government recommends exclusive breastfeeding for around 6 months and thereafter with other foods



74% of mothers start to breastfeed²



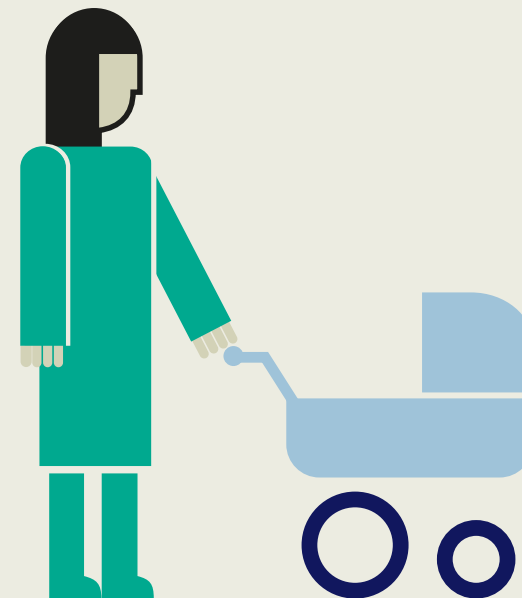
44% are breastfeeding at 6 weeks³



36% are breastfeeding at 6 months⁴



Only 1% of babies are exclusively breastfed until they are 6 months old⁵



Mothers who are young, white, from routine and manual professions and who left education early are least likely to breastfeed⁶



Breastfeeding benefits the baby from top to toe^{7,8,9}

NOT breastfeeding is linked to an increased risk of

ear infections (otitis media)

tooth decay & dental malocclusion

chest infections (lower respiratory infections)

diarrhoea & vomiting (gastroenteritis)

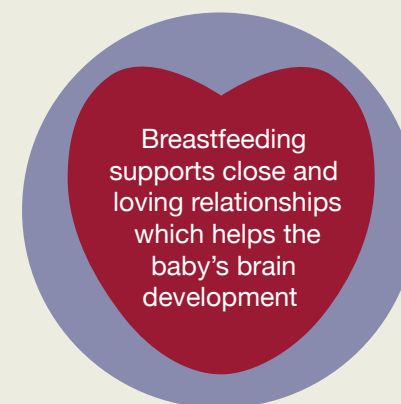
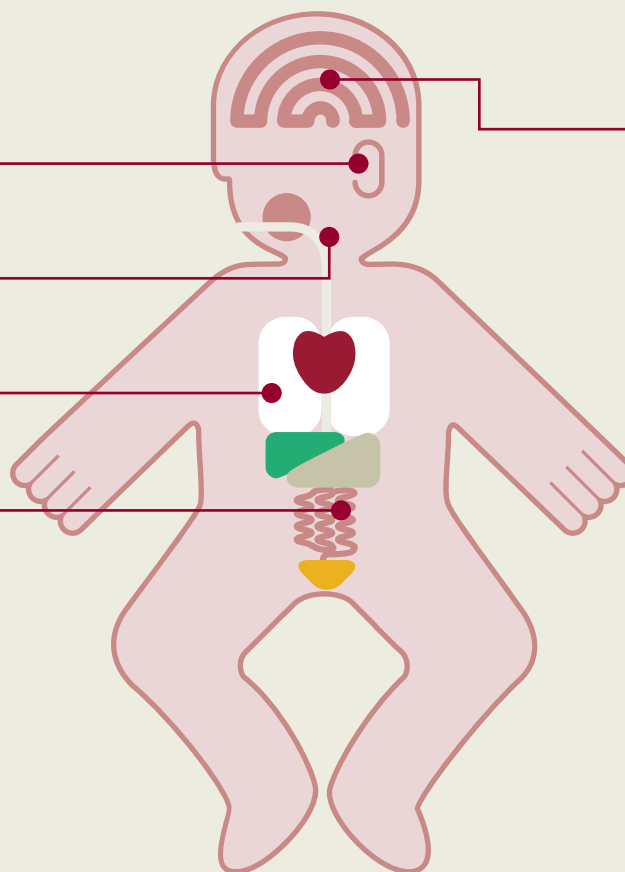
death from gut infections in sick and premature babies (necrotising enterocolitis)

overweight/obesity later in life

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)

There is evidence to suggest

there may be a link between breastfeeding and educational attainment





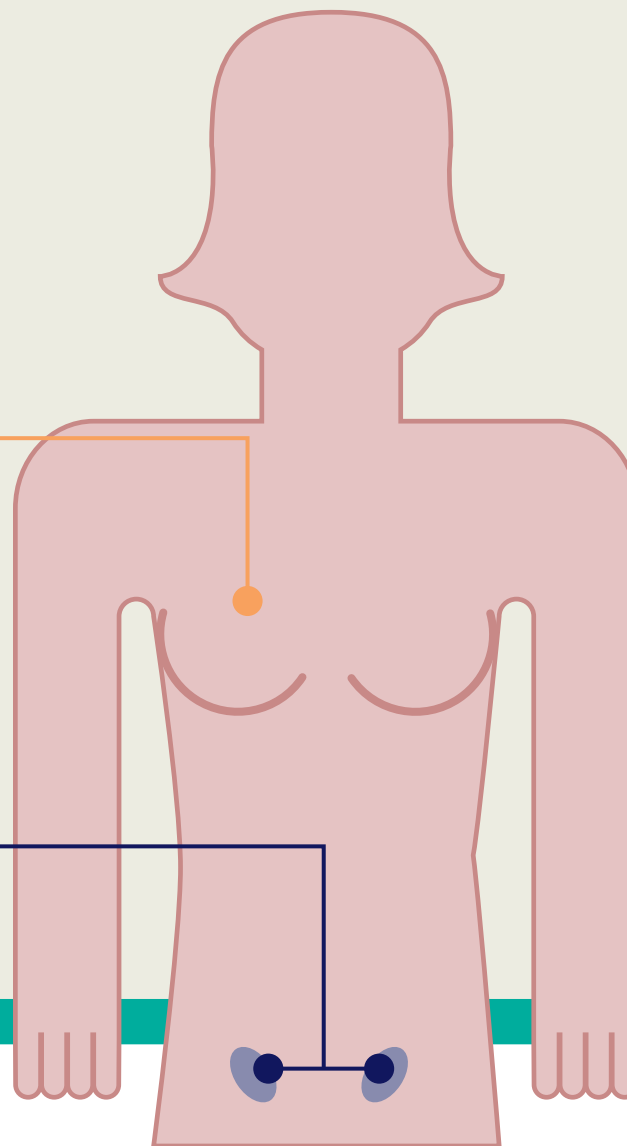
Maternal health benefits of breastfeeding^{10,11,12}

There is good evidence to suggest that breastfeeding decreases the risk of

Breast cancer

There is some evidence to suggest that breastfeeding protects against

Ovarian cancer



Breastfeeding supports close and loving relationships, improves mental health and can reduce the risk of postnatal depression

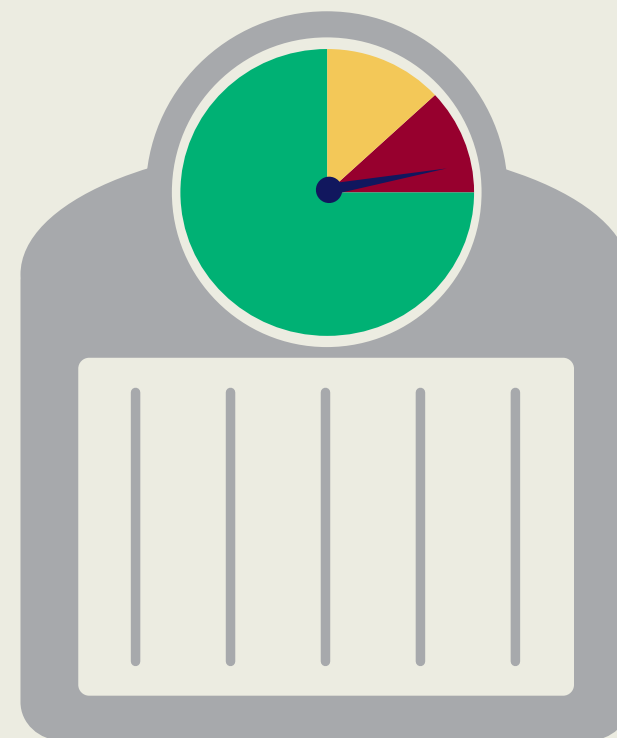


Breastfeeding reduces overweight and obesity

There is growing evidence linking breastfeeding with protection against later overweight/obesity¹³

A recent meta-analysis suggests breastfeeding is associated with a **13%** reduction in the prevalence of child overweight or obesity

Child obesity in England costs approximately **£51 million** per year and into adulthood, **£588-686 million** per annum¹⁴





Breastfeeding in a global context



Rates of any breastfeeding at 6 months¹⁵:

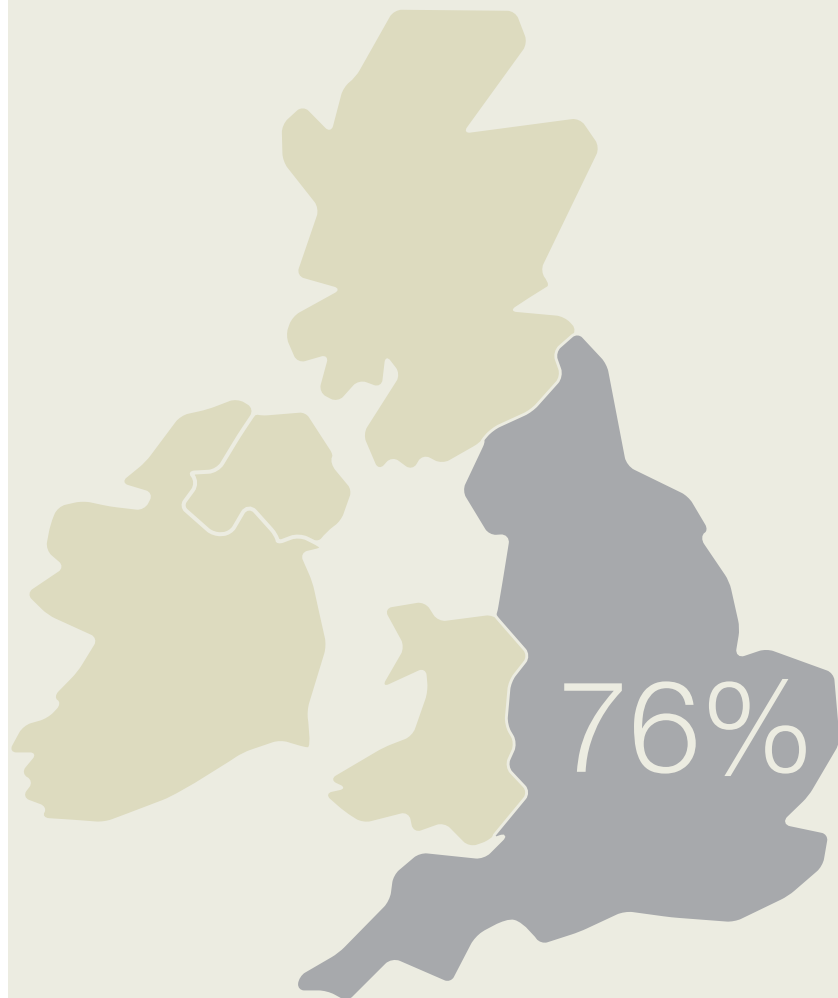
- Senegal – 99%
- US – 49%
- UK – 34%

Globally, not breastfeeding is estimated to account for¹⁶:

- 823,000 baby deaths a year
- 20,000 breast cancer deaths in women a year
- Lower population intelligence which costs society \$302 billion annually



The cost of low breastfeeding rates in England



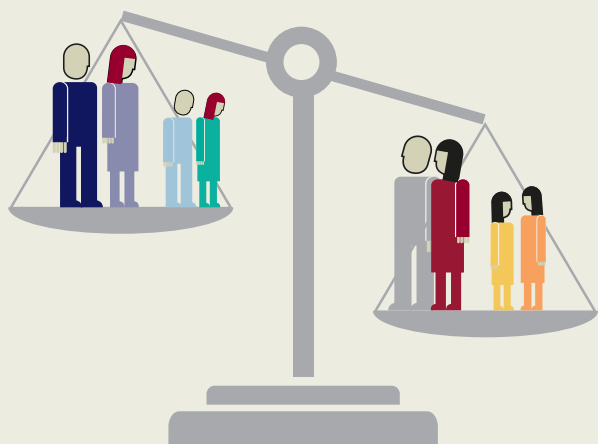
76% of all babies have had formula milk by 6 weeks¹⁷

The cost to the NHS every year of treating just 5 illnesses linked to babies not being breastfed is at least **£48 million**¹⁸:

- ear infection
- chest infection
- gut infection
- necrotising enterocolitis
(gut infection in premature babies)
- breast cancer



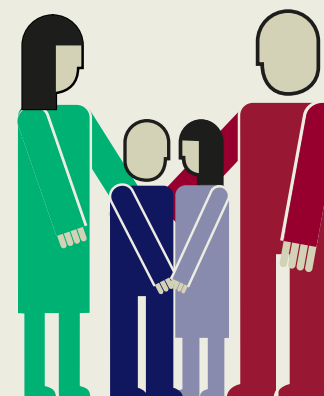
Breastfeeding supports families and communities¹⁹



Breastfeeding can help to reduce health inequalities for babies and improve their life chances



Breastfeeding can support family budgets – less illness and time off work, feeds babies for significantly less



Families benefit from the inherent relationship building that breastfeeding brings



Why mothers in England don't breastfeed

Only 36% of babies in England²⁰ are receiving some breastmilk at 6 months compared to 71% of Norwegian babies²¹



Eight out of ten women stop breastfeeding before they want to and could have continued with more support²²



Many English mothers feel unsupported and find breastfeeding

- very difficult
- not acceptable in public
- difficult to combine with work and lifestyles



Families live in a culture where formula feeding is seen as normal and nearly as good as breastfeeding



Our ambition for England^{23,24}



Breastfeeding is seen as normal and supported by everyone – in our public services and in the home, out and about and when returning to work



What needs to be done^{25,26,27,28}

1

**Raise awareness
that breastfeeding
matters**

2

**Provide effective
professional
support to mothers
and their families**

3

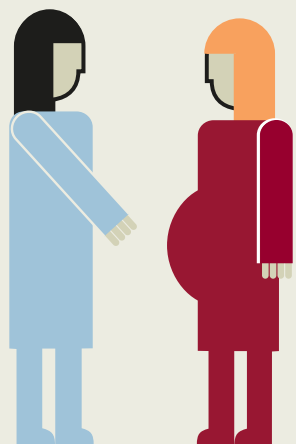
**Ensure that mothers
have access to
support, encouragement
and understanding
in their community**

4

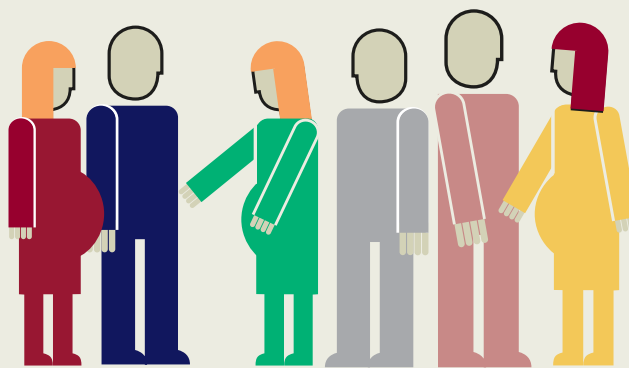
**Restrict the
promotion of
formula milks
and baby foods**



Raising awareness that breastfeeding matters²⁹



1-2-1 empathetic and mother-centred antenatal conversations with midwives and health visitors



Antenatal classes, for all parents, that provide holistic approaches to loving and feeding babies



Local health promotion campaigns and education for all



Provide effective professional support to mothers and their families^{30,31,32,33}



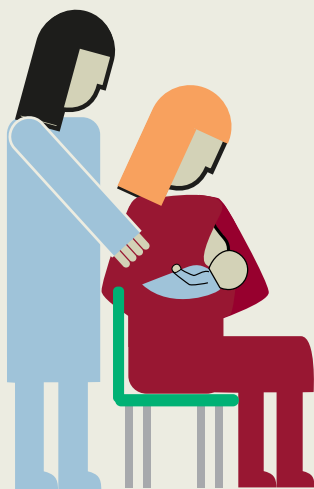
THE BABY
FRIENDLY
INITIATIVE

unicef 
UNITED KINGDOM

Every maternity unit, health visiting service, neonatal unit and children's centre should be implementing the Unicef UK Baby Friendly Initiative standards, and ensure that universities are teaching their future health professionals to Unicef UK Baby Friendly standards



Ensure that mothers have access to support in their community^{34,35}



Provide mother to mother support schemes – telephone, one-to-one and groups



Encourage Welcome to Breastfeed schemes in all public spaces, anywhere, anytime



Support employers to implement policies, practices and environments that support mothers to breastfeed during study and work



Restrict the advertising of formula milks and baby foods^{36,37,38}



All maternity, health visiting, neonatal and children's centre services should implement the Unicef UK Baby Friendly standards

Prohibit advertising in local authority facilities

Support your trading standards teams by reporting violations of the UK law in your local area



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