



Consumer Feedback from Survey: Maternity Practices and Care in Ontario During 2023-2026

Survey Findings: Maternity Practices and Care in Ontario During 2023-2026

- Survey Start Date: February 23, 2026
- Survey End Date: September 07, 2026
- Number of Respondents: 119
- Average length of time to complete survey: 15.32 minutes
- All respondents indicated that they gave birth in Ontario during 2023 -2026



Postal Code Regions of Respondents

The overall postal code range for Ontario is **K0A to R5J**

- **K** covers eastern Ontario, including Ottawa and areas around Kingston: 15
- **L** covers southern Ontario, including regions like Mississauga, Brampton, Hamilton, and Niagara: 7
- **M** covers Toronto specifically: 3
- **N** covers southwestern Ontario, including London and Windsor: 46
- **P** covers northern Ontario, including Sudbury, North Bay, and Thunder Bay: 45
- **R** extends into Kenora and nearby northwestern areas: 0

(2 respondents gave the last 3 digits of their postal code and 1 respondent did not answer this question).

Source for postal code regions: <https://postzipcode.com/canada/ontario/>

Prenatal Information

Did you attend prenatal classes?

Yes: 59

No: 60

Not sure: 0



Prenatal Information

If you attended prenatal classes, were they in person or online?

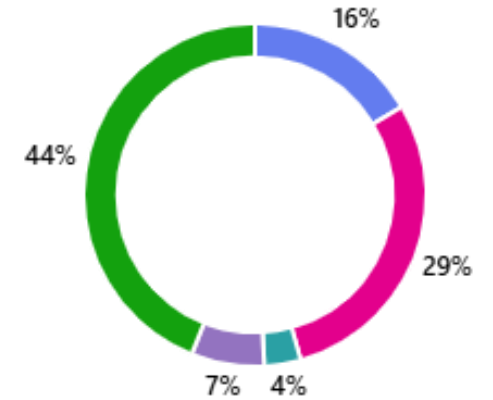
In person classes: 19

Online classes: 34

I attended in person and online classes: 4

I attended prenatal classes in the past but not for this baby: 8

I did not attend any prenatal classes: 51



Prenatal Information

If you did not attend prenatal classes, where did you get information to help you prepare for the birth of your baby?

I attended prenatal classes: 43

I did not need any information because I had given birth before: 29

Physician: 31

Midwife: 22

Public health nurse: 3

Hospital nurse: 16

Family member eg. parent, sister: 35

Friends: 40

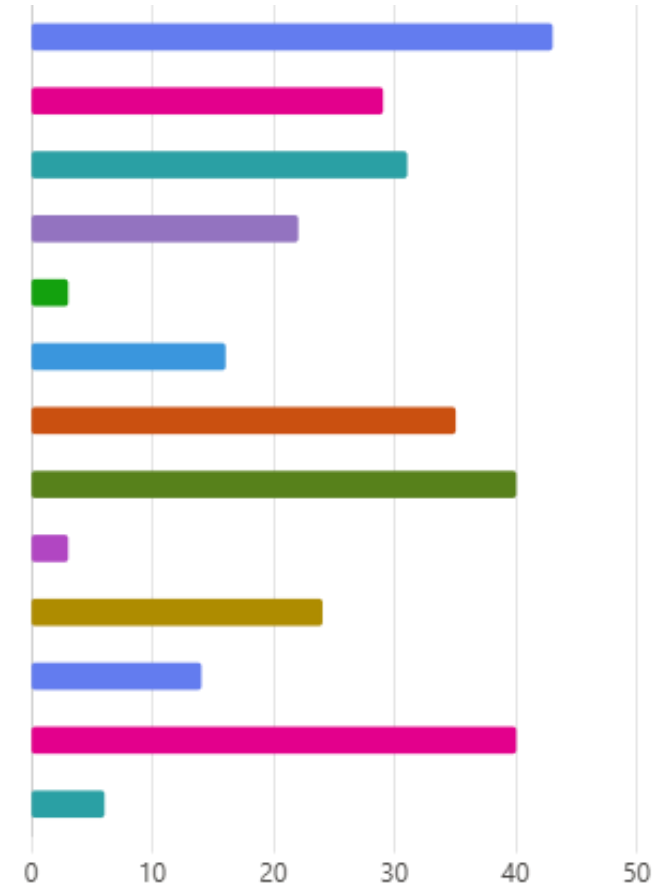
Peer support group such as La Leche League: 3

Written material eg. book: 24

Online resource recommended by a health care provider: 14

Internet eg. Google search: 40

I did not need any information: 6



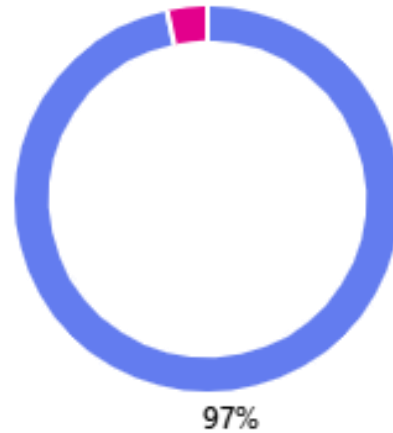
The Birth

Where did you give birth?

Hospital/birthing centre: 115

At home: 4

Other: 0



The Birth

Were there any concerns or complications such as premature birth, medical issue with baby, or medical issue with parent who gave birth? Briefly explain.

Gestational diabetes
(5)

Pcos, thyroid
problems and
diabetes

Hypertension
(4)

Baby was
apneic at birth
requiring CPAP

Placenta would not
come out. Had to
have it surgically
removed. I had a
blood transfusion.

C-section
(8)

Pre-eclampsia,
fetal distress and
C-section

Hemorrhage
(6)



The Birth

Did your baby go skin-to-skin with you soon after being born? Select the response closest to your experience.

My baby and I were skin-to-skin within 5 minutes of my baby being born: 81

My baby and I were skin-to-skin within 1 hour of my baby being born: 24

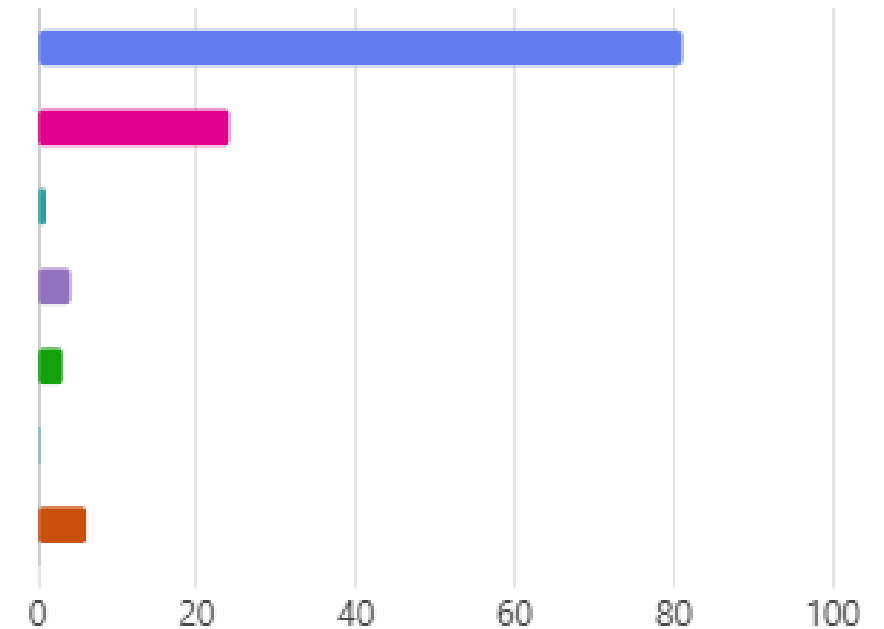
My baby and I were skin-to-skin within 4 hours of my baby being born: 1

My baby and I were skin-to-skin at some point during the first day: 4

I don't recall when my baby and I were first skin-to-skin: 3

I don't recall my baby and I ever being skin-to-skin: 0

Other: 6



The Birth

Did your baby stay in the same room with you or stay in a nursery while in hospital?
Select the response closest to your experience.

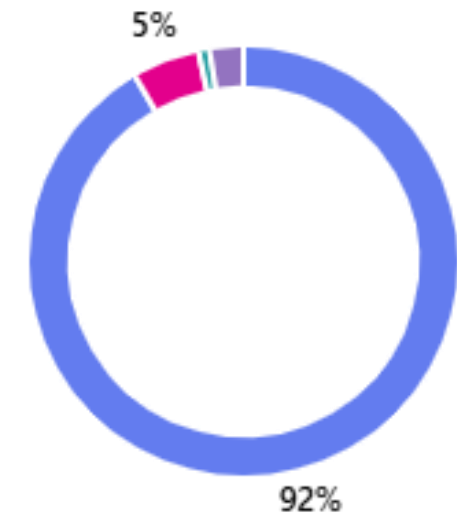
My baby stayed in my room: 109

My baby stayed in the nursery: 6

My baby stayed with me during the day and was in the nursery at night: 1

I had a home birth: 3

I don't remember: 0



The Birth

How long did you stay in hospital? Select the most accurate response.

Less than 24 hours: 14

About 24 hours: 41

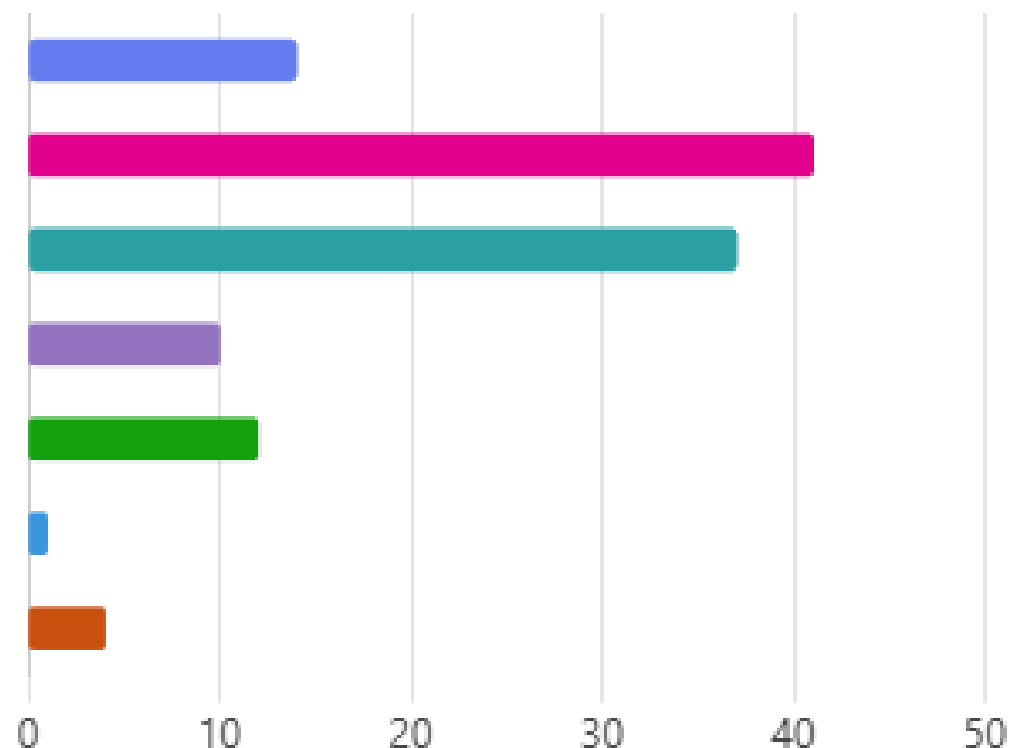
2 days: 37

3 days: 10

4 days: 12

I don't remember: 1

I had a home birth: 4



Sources of Information

Please indicate your main sources of information about baby care once you and baby were home.

Physician: 24

Midwife: 14

Hospital nurses: 15

Public health nurses: 19

Lactation consultant: 19

Breastfeeding or well baby clinic: 8

Peer support person such as La Leche League leader: 1

Partner: 11

Family member eg. parent, grandparent, sister: 29

Friend: 20

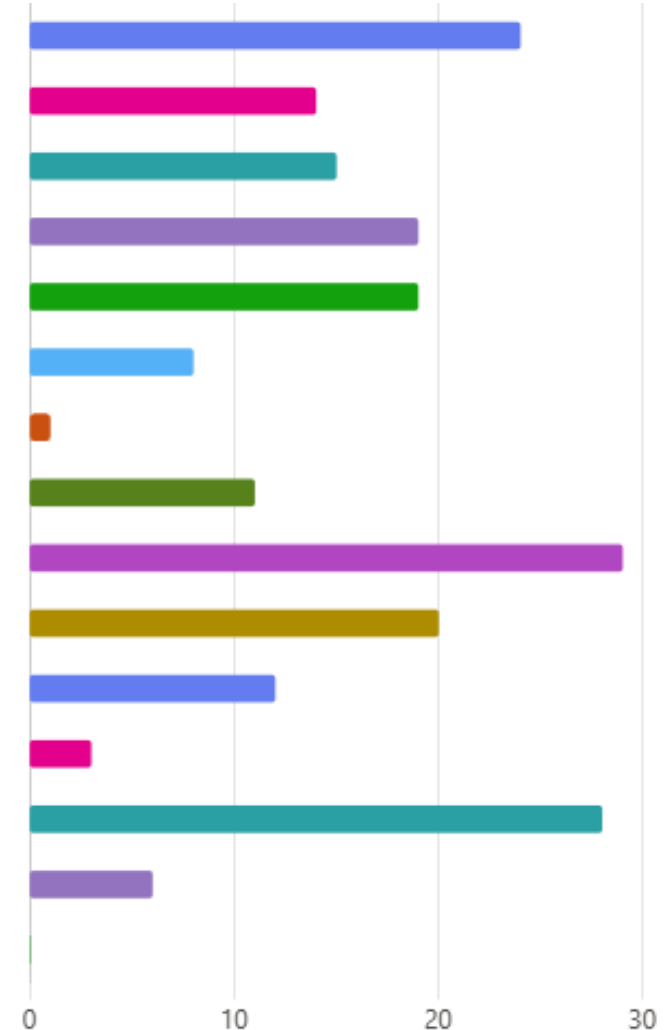
Written material eg. Book: 12

Online resources recommended by a health care provider: 3

Internet eg. Google search: 28

I didn't need any information about baby care: 6

I don't remember: 0



Infant Feeding

How did you feed your baby during the first few days?

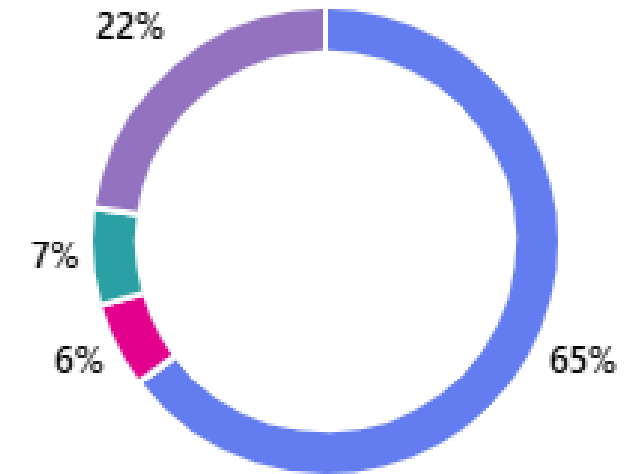
Breastfed: 77

Fed breastmilk but baby did not feed at the breast: 7

Fed infant formula: 8

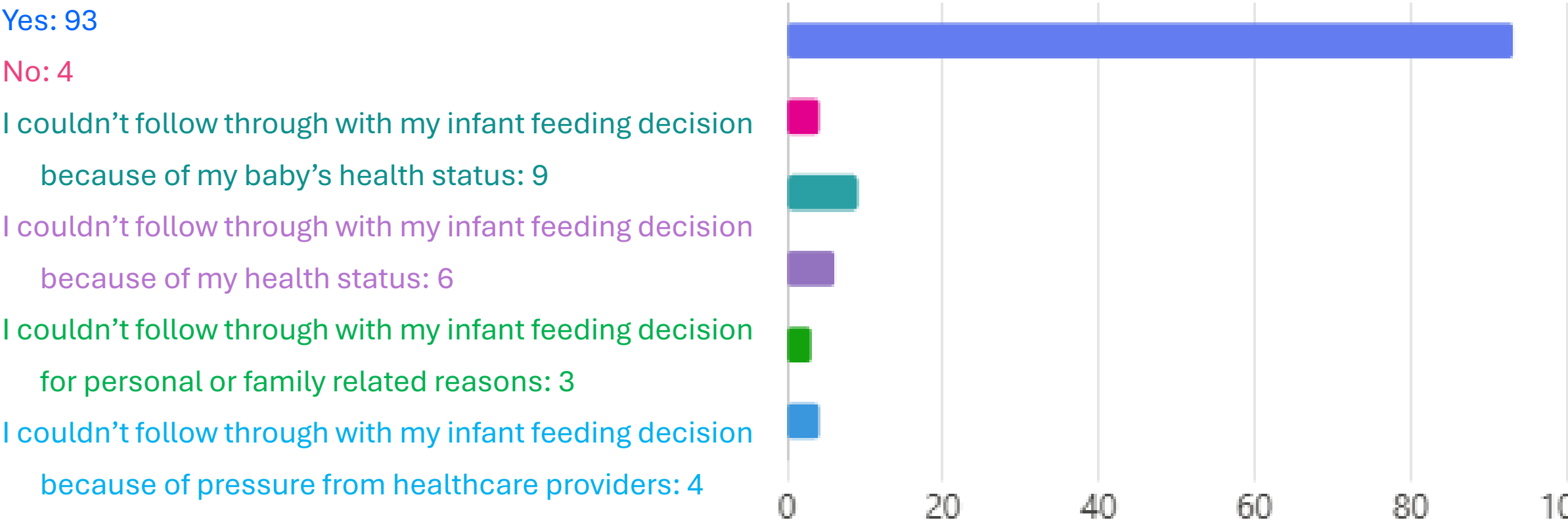
Breastfed and also fed infant formula: 27

I don't remember: 0



Infant Feeding

Do you feel that you made an informed infant feeding decision? Select the response closest to your experience.



Infant Feeding

Did you receive any help or support with infant feeding? Check all that apply.

I received support while in hospital: 48

I received support from my midwife: 29

I received support from a public health nurse

once my baby and I were home eg. home visits: 23

I received support from a breastfeeding or well baby clinic: 8

I received support from a lactation consultant: 53

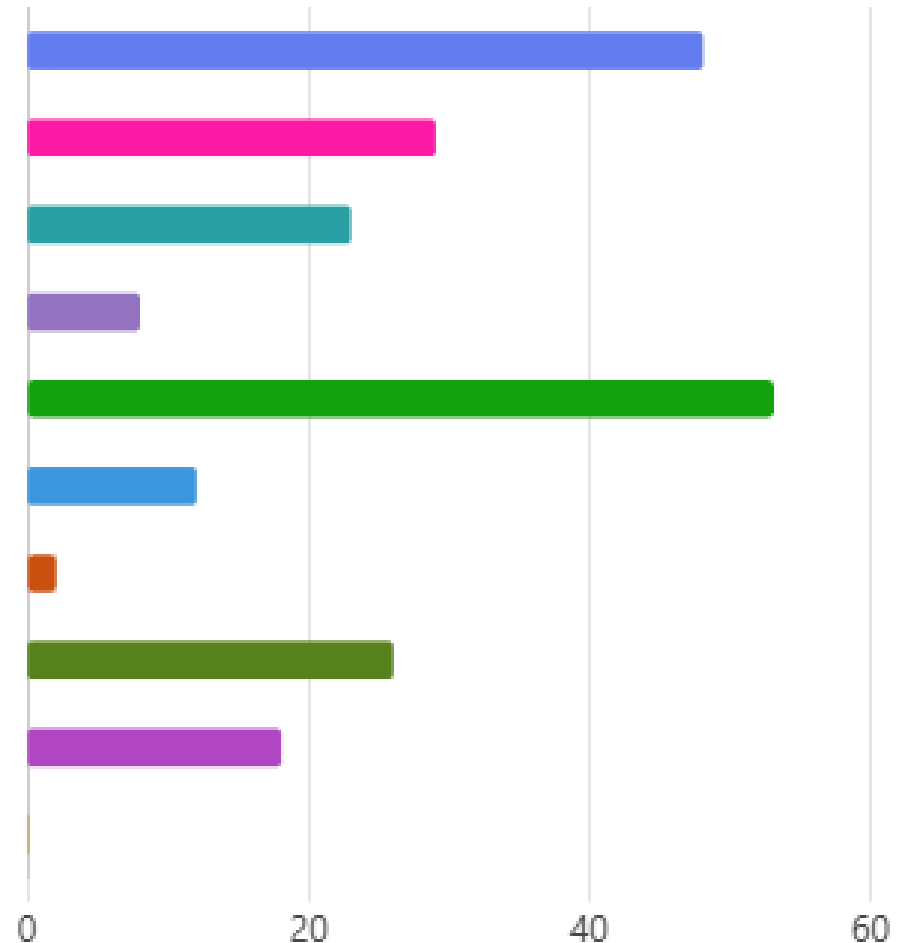
I received support from my physician or primary healthcare provider: 12

I received support from a peer support group such as La Leche League: 2

I received support from family and friends: 26

I did not need any support: 18

I do not remember: 0



Infant Feeding

Did you receive any coupons or samples of infant formula? Select the response closest to your experience.

I received coupons or samples of infant formula in the mail: 47

I received coupons or samples of infant formula
from a family member or friend: 2

I received coupons or samples of infant formula from the hospital: 13

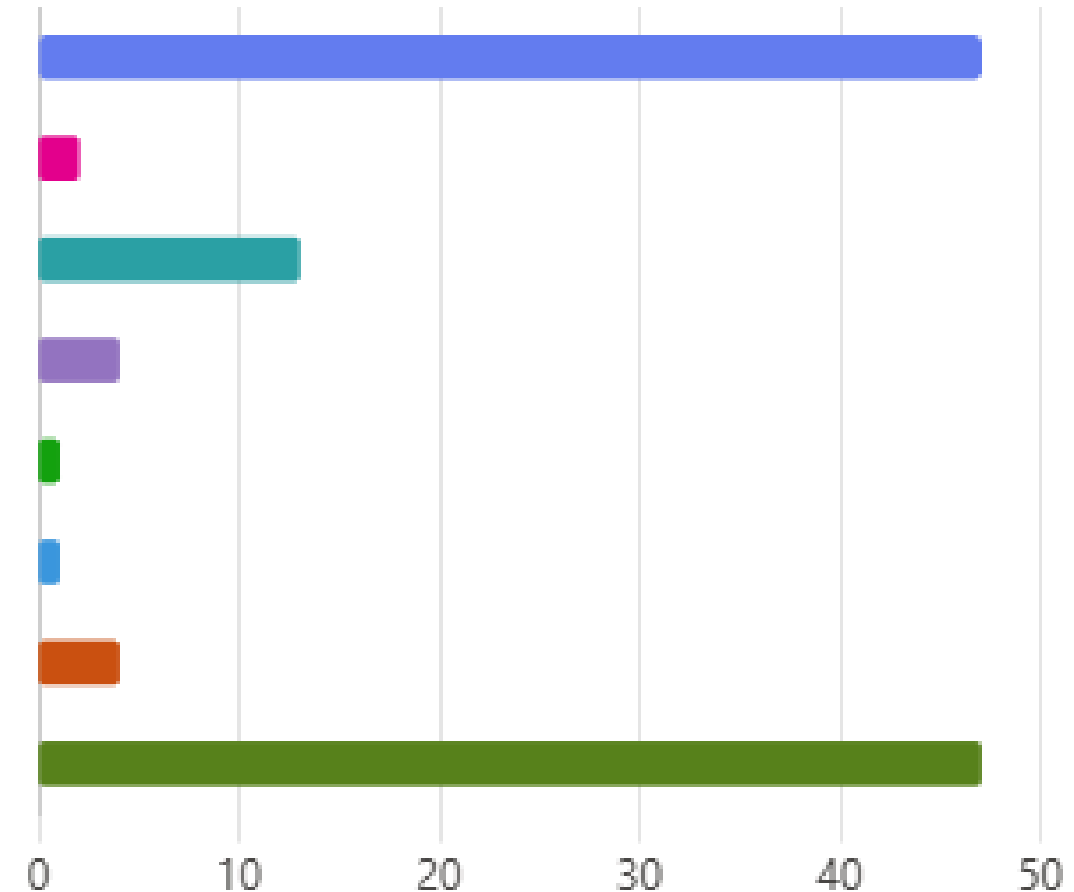
I received coupons or samples of infant formula
from my physician or midwife: 4

I received coupons or samples of infant formula
from my public health nurse: 1

I received coupons or samples of infant formula
from a breastfeeding or well baby clinic: 1

I cannot recall where I got coupons or samples of infant formula: 4

I did not receive any coupons or samples of infant formula: 47



Infant Feeding

If you breastfed or fed your baby only breastmilk (no other drinks or foods), how long did you do this?

At 6 months started solids with baby led weaning; still breastfeeding for comfort at 23 mo.

Given formula in hospital, breastfed afterwards. No other drinks/food until 6 months. Breastfed 13 months.

Had to supplement with formula while in hospital and first few days at home. After one week, transitioned to only breastmilk and continued this until 6 months when we introduced solids.

Exclusively breastfed for 5 months. Breastfed plus solids up to 13 months.

I tried for 10 days.

Combo fed x2 months then switched to formula due to dairy allergy.

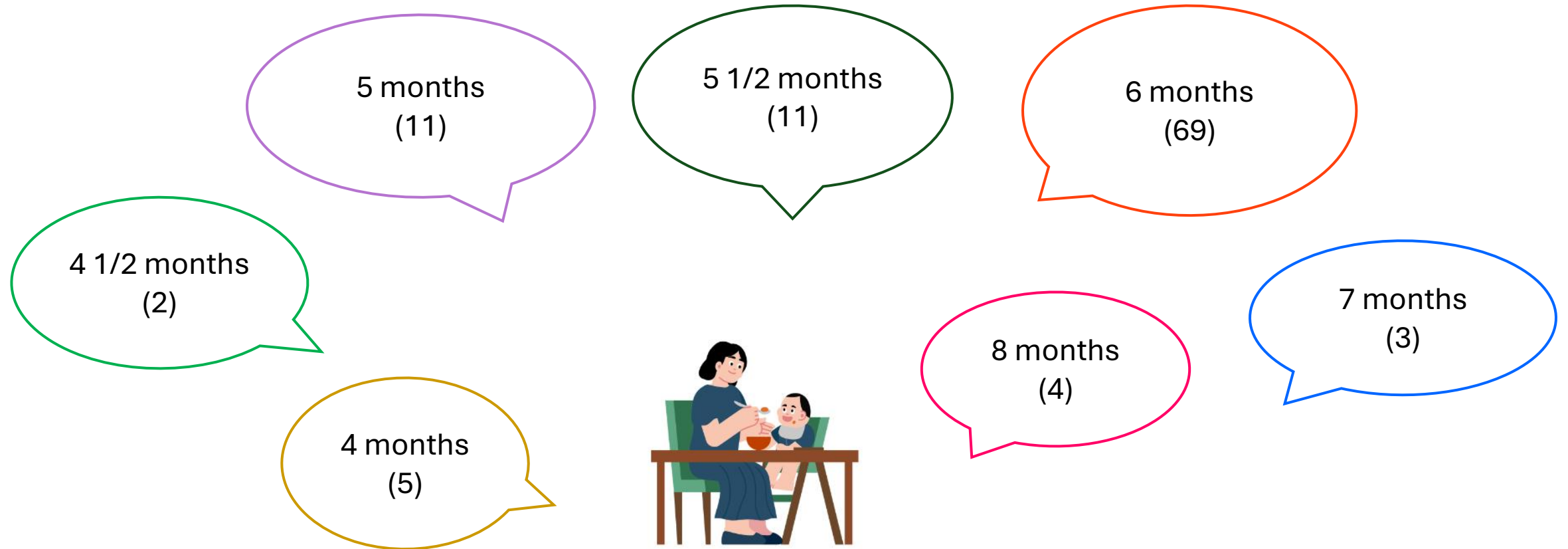
Exclusively pumped once home from the hospital, but started combo feeding shortly after.

6 months exclusively and 14 months total.



Infant Feeding

At what age did you begin to feed your baby solids (baby food such as infant cereal, vegetables, fruit, meats)?



NA or not yet = 14

Challenges

Do you recall facing any challenges in those early weeks and months of life with a new baby and how did you handle them? Would anything have made things easier?

Breastfeeding was a challenge this time and had to move to bottle feeding due to lack of lactation consultants in our area.

Baby and I had thrush and unable to access care from a physician. As a result, I was left untreated and we received staggered care. We were treated on and off for thrush for 9 weeks. It was awful.

I had PPD, I always was worried if my baby was getting enough milk, I was worried when my body regulated and my boobs didn't feel full anymore.

Sleep, messy house, not eating or drinking enough.

Shallow latch, engorgement and over production.

Big time!! PPD and huge challenges trying to breast feed.



Challenges

Main themes:

- **Breastfeeding and feeding difficulties** (e.g. Latching problems, painful feeding, low milk supply, oversupply/fast let-down, pumping, difficulty transitioning to bottle, feeding decisions and formula supplementation)
- **Limited access to timely, skilled lactation support** (e.g. Lack of local IBCLCs, long wait lists, travel distances, inadequate help in hospital, lack of follow-up, inability to get home visits, having to pay privately)
- **Infant health concerns affecting feeding and adjustment** (e.g. Tongue/lip tie, jaundice, poor weight gain, colic, reflux, cow's milk allergy/intolerance, thrush and other medical concerns)
- **Postpartum mental health and emotional wellbeing** (e.g. General anxiety, postpartum depression, emotional overwhelm, birth trauma, feeling like a failure, need for counselling/mental health support)
- **Insufficient practical, family and partner support** (e.g. Not having family nearby, limited partner availability, managing other children, housework/meals, needing help to rest, desire for home support)
- **Sleep deprivation and infant sleep difficulties** (e.g. Ongoing fatigue, babies who wouldn't sleep, frequent waking, colic and prolonged night-time difficulties)

Practices

Do you have any recommendations for hospitals providing care to families giving birth? Please explain.

Honestly, everything was great! We had the best care and the nurses/staff were amazing.

I had to leave my city to give birth; it would've been nice to have more support for my family as well while in the city.

More of "do you have any questions?" Or "let us know if you have questions" after baby is born... we had no idea how to do anything!!

Education for ALL maternity nurses on lactation and increased access to lactation...

Not to push formula onto new moms who want to breastfeed. I felt like I was pushed.

Explain everything fully. Provide as much education on how to be a mom while in hospital ...

Many... lol. But the top ones would be-support folks - people don't know what they don't know ...



Practices: Hospital

Main themes:

- **Need for skilled, individualized lactation support** (e.g. train all maternity nurses in breastfeeding support; access to lactation support every day including weekends; provide follow-up or referrals for lactation support after discharge)
- **Increase postpartum staffing and nurse availability** (e.g. increase staffing and nurse availability after baby is born; check on mothers and babies more frequently; provide more individualized help with feeding and infant care; reduce the sense that mothers are "on their own")
- **Improve education to families** (e.g. explain things thoroughly and proactively; don't assume parents know what to ask)
- **Provide respectful, family centred care** (e.g. listen to parents, respect informed choices, avoid unnecessary pressure, avoid judgment)
- **Protect early mother–baby contact and breastfeeding opportunities** (e.g. immediate skin-to-skin, uninterrupted time for feeding, fewer unnecessary separations)
- **Improve the mother's postpartum experience and care** (e.g. the mother's needs can get pushed to the side once baby is born; monitor and respond to maternal pain; mental-health information; support for partners/families)

Practices

Do you have any recommendations for community health services (eg. public health units) providing care to families expecting a baby and families after they have had a new baby? Please explain.

Use social media to share upcoming classes, resources available to families! Market them like a business would. Social media is accessed first for information instead of head hunting a public health website.

Lactation consultants available for home visits would be amazing.

Every public health in southwestern Ontario should have lactation support. Offer prenatal breastfeeding courses.

More services around breastfeeding.

My Health Unit no longer does well baby checks and only does immunizations. I wish they still did well baby checks.

Have an option for in person prenatal classes again. Keep offering home visits for the nurse to come help with breastfeeding.



Practices: Community Health Services

Main themes:

- **Increased access to lactation support** (e.g. universal access to a lactation consultant once home, lactation consultants available through public health, more breastfeeding clinics, more home visits, breastfeeding support for families regardless of where they live)
- **Provide more timely, proactive and ongoing postpartum follow-up** (e.g. early call happens when first home but public health should continue checking in beyond the first few days/weeks; follow-up should be based on need rather than a single standardized contact)
- **Expand home-based, accessible and flexible services** (e.g. telephone support, virtual appointments, home visits, travelling services, rural outreach, services that don't require parents to travel)
- **Improve prenatal education** (e.g. Restore/expand in-person prenatal classes; provide free accessible classes; start feeding conversations early; ensure information is current, evidence-based and inclusive)
- **Improve awareness, navigation and connection to community resources** (e.g. families don't know about services or how to access them; problems with unclear information, expired links, programs not accessible based on geographic boundaries)
- **Expand postpartum mental health support** (e.g. screening later in postpartum period for mental health concerns; easier access to mental health services; greater attention to mother's physical and emotional recovery)

Practices

What would you recommend to families giving birth to help them meet their infant feeding goals and adjust to life with a new baby?

Socialize! Talk to other moms so you know you're not the only one going through things, listen to what other moms did and try new things with your babe if you are struggling.

Reach out for support. Have a midwife if you can.

Advocate for yourself and baby, trust your gut when you don't feel something is right, and always get a second option.

Do your research. Use all resources available to you.

Take it day by day and don't give up. You will get there, but it takes time and patience. Formula may seem easier at beginning, but breast feeding is a million times easier now. I almost gave up. So glad I didn't!



Be prepared and demand to do skin-to-skin immediately after birth. Continue skin-to-skin when going home(daily). Stay close to baby. Plan for lots of rest...

Recommendations From Respondents

Main themes:

- **Early access to skilled lactation support** (e.g. See an IBCLC before or immediately after birth; don't wait until problems become severe; have ongoing access to skilled support)
- **Be informed before the baby arrives** (e.g. Take prenatal classes, learn about breastfeeding/latch/feeding cues, learn normal newborn behaviour, learn about available resources, and use credible/professional sources rather than social media influencers)
- **Build a support system and accept help** (e.g. Don't try to do everything alone and arrange support before the birth; involve family, partners, friends, midwives, public health, doulas, peer support; get practical help at home – meals and household chores)
- **Be flexible - don't view feeding difficulties as failure** (e.g. Have a feeding plan but recognize that things may not go according to plan; don't view changes to the plan as failure)
- **Advocate for yourself and your baby - trust your gut** (e.g. Ask questions, trust your instincts, speak up when something doesn't seem right, seek a second opinion if in doubt, don't allow healthcare providers or others to pressure you)

Practices

Is there anything else you wish to add?

Would be lovely to have more support in hospital after birth. However, I recognize that is just not possible with our health care system today.

Breastfeeding was by far the most difficult part of becoming a new parent. Now that I am 15 months into breastfeeding, I enjoy it so much but it took many months of struggles to get that that point.

I'm appreciative of my local public health resources ... in-person prenatal classes provided lots of resources and I was able to tap into quickly because I had hard copies of the info ... free weekly local breastfeeding drop-in clinic (no appt), baby care basics, baby & me play group, mom support group, public health nurse, parenting hotline...

There needs to be incentive for hospitals to support breastfeeding.

Midwives are so helpful.



Note: 22 responses to this question

Additional Thoughts From Respondents

Main themes:

- **Inadequate Postpartum Care** (e.g. Felt abandoned or rushed after birth with inadequate follow-up and little physical or emotional support, felt deprioritized after the birth, call for more public health services)
- **Midwifery Care Is Highly Valued** (e.g. Better outcome support, uninterrupted "golden hour" contact, continuous breastfeeding help, communication and personal connection)
- **Breastfeeding Support Is Needed** (e.g. Breastfeeding cited as one of the most difficult parts of early parenthood and individual support—such as from lactation consultants - described as "life-changing"; need for standardized education and skill building of healthcare providers; access to lactation consultants is limited)
- **Rural and Remote Access Challenges** (e.g. Traveling long distances for care, lack of local birthing services, and financial burdens)
- **Need for Improved Communication** (e.g. Rushed care, unanswered questions, dismissive interactions, resource overwhelm, unhelpful guidance)