

Texas Ten Step Fact Sheet

What are the Ten Steps?

The Texas Ten Step (TTS) designation aligns with the World Health Organization and UNICEF's Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding, which supports mothers and their babies with breastfeeding initiation, exclusivity and continuation after families return home from birthing facilities.

What are the benefits of breastfeeding?

- Breastfeeding can provide health benefits for babies, such as reduced risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), necrotizing enterocolitis (NEC), lower respiratory infections, ear infections and stomach-related infections.
- Breastfeeding has long-term benefits for children, including reduced risk for obesity, developing type 2 diabetes, asthma and acute lymphocytic leukemia.
- Research shows that mothers who breastfeed have a decreased risk of developing type 2 diabetes, hypertension, and breast and ovarian cancers.¹
- In addition to health impacts, breastfeeding a baby for one year may save a family between \$900 and \$2,000 in annual health care and formula expenses.

Breastfeeding: What's happening in Texas?

- In Texas (2019) 88.5 percent of new moms begin breastfeeding; however, significant disparities exist across racial and ethnic groups:²
 - Asian: 95%
 - White: 90.4%
 - Hispanic: 88.4%
 - American Indian and Alaskan Native: 87.6
 - Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander: 86.5
 - Black: 81.5%
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) 2020 Breastfeeding Report Card demonstrates the following breastfeeding statistics for Texas infants:

¹ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK525106/>

² https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/70/wr/mm7021a1.htm?s_cid=mm7021a1_w#T1_down

- 85.1% were ever breastfed.
- 46.3% were exclusively breastfed through 3 months.
- 26.9% were exclusively breastfed through 6 months.
- 58.5% were receiving breastmilk at 6 months.
- 34.9% were receiving breastmilk at 12 months.

Ten Step Program Background

- Established in 1999, the TTS program aims to help create environments where policies and practices support mothers' informed infant feeding decisions, and where evidence-based maternity and newborn health care practices are part of everyday patient care.
- TTS requires that all designated facilities ensure that their healthcare team is trained to provide breastfeeding education, resources and continued support throughout a patient's stay.
- Nearly 70 percent of birthing hospitals in Texas have received the Texas Ten Step designation.
- The trend towards providing optimal maternity care practices is clear. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report that the percentage of births in hospitals with practices supportive of breastfeeding increased from 3.8% in 2010 to 29.1% in 2020.
- 93% of Texas Ten Step facilities have discontinued the practice of providing formula-sponsored gift bags to new parents.³
- Research has found that mothers who experience six of the Ten Steps while in the birthing facility are 2.7 times more likely to reach their exclusive breastfeeding goals than mothers who experienced one or none of these steps.
- One study found that mothers who did not experience any Ten Step practices were 13 times more likely to stop breastfeeding early than those who experienced the following six practices:⁴
 - Breastfeeding initiation within one hour of birth (step 4)
 - Only breastmilk given (step 6)
 - Rooming in (step 7)
 - Breastfeeding on demand (step 8)
 - No pacifiers given (step 9)
 - Fostering breastfeeding support groups (step 10)

³ [Bag-Free Hospitals and Birth Centers | BanTheBags.org](https://www.banthebags.org/)

⁴ <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/18829830/>

- Outdated practices and policies, such as introducing formula before two days of life, delaying skin-to-skin contact and lack of on-site lactation support can lead to breastfeeding difficulties.
- Mothers who give birth at a Texas Ten Step-designated facility are more likely to be discharged from the hospital exclusively breastfeeding than mothers who deliver in a non-designated facility.

Racial Disparities in Breastfeeding

- Studies have demonstrated that when health care providers work under standardized care, biases that may impact patient outcomes are removed across all races and ethnicities.⁵
- Breastfeeding rates among Black women show a drastic improvement when they give birth in facilities practicing the Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding— a 17 percent increase in breastfeeding initiation rates.
- Texas data demonstrate that racial and ethnic disparities in infant feeding are narrowed through implementation of the Ten Steps. As breastfeeding is related to many short- and long-term maternal and child health outcomes, breastfeeding has implications for reducing health disparities throughout the life course.
- Studies have consistently demonstrated that rates of breastfeeding initiation, duration and exclusivity are 10-20 percent lower among Black infants as compared with white infants.⁶

⁵ [Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Breastfeeding Initiation – United States, 2019 | MMWR \(cdc.gov\)](#)

⁶ <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/68/wr/mm6834a3.htm>