



CWHS

# Data Points

RESULTS FROM THE 1997 CALIFORNIA WOMEN'S HEALTH SURVEY

Public health officials have recommended that mothers breastfeed their infants for at least six months. The National Academy of Pediatrics has recently revised its recommendation and now advises women to breastfeed for one year.

The 1997 California Women's Health Survey asked women, "How old was your last baby when you stopped breastfeeding?" To examine whether breastfeeding duration differed by income levels, we classified breastfeeding mothers as "low income" (<200% of poverty level) and "adequate income"

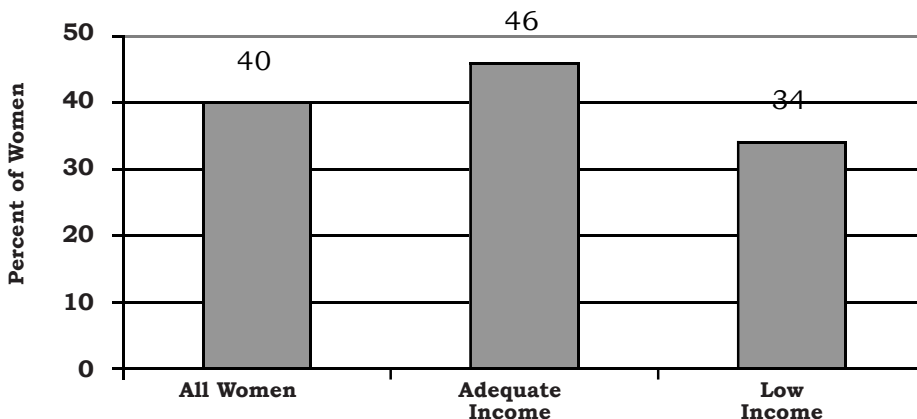
(at or above 200% of poverty level). The low income classification is similar to the WIC income requirement of <185% of poverty level. This analysis was restricted to women who had given birth within the last five years.

- Only 40% of mothers who initiated breastfeeding breastfed their infants for at least six months.
- Low income mothers were less likely than mothers with adequate incomes to breastfeed their infants for at least six months (34% vs. 46%).

## BREASTFEEDING DURATION, BY INCOME

**Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Supplemental Nutrition Branch  
Maternal and Child Health Branch**

**Percent of Mothers Who Breastfed for At Least Six Months (Among Women Who Initiated Breastfeeding), By Income; California, 1997**



### Public Health Message:

*Given that fewer than half (40%) of mothers initiating breastfeeding continued this behavior for six months, public health educational campaigns and interventions are needed to encourage mothers to breastfeed their children longer. Messages to promote breastfeeding duration should target low income women.*

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