

Black mothers cite lack of desire as top reasons for not breastfeeding

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While more American mothers are breastfeeding today, non-Hispanic Black/African American women are less likely to initiate and continue breastfeeding, primarily due to a lack of desire and lack of self-efficacy, according to research presented Monday, Oct. 4, at the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) National Conference and Exhibition in San Francisco.

Fifty-four percent of black women initiate [breastfeeding](#), compared to the 73 percent national average. In the study, "Barriers to Breastfeeding Reported by Exclusively Formula Feeding Mothers," urban mothers who were exclusively formula feeding were interviewed about their breastfeeding perceptions and decision not to breastfeed.

More blacks than non-blacks reported "lacking a desire to breastfeed" (55 percent versus 27 percent). Black [mothers](#) were less likely to report other obstacles that are more easy to overcome, such as misinformation about breastfeeding and whether a contraindication truly exists.

"Better training of health care professionals, so they can convey accurate information about breastfeeding, will likely result in improved rates of breastfeeding, but the effects may be seen more in non-blacks than blacks," said study author Amudha Palaniappan, MD. "Further research is needed to explore what contributes to lack of desire among blacks so we can develop new strategies to overcome the disparities in breastfeeding and related health outcomes."

Provided by American Academy of Pediatrics

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