

Obstetricians' group urges docs to help support breast-feeding

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(HealthDay)—There are many things obstetricians and gynecologists can

do to support breast-feeding mothers, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) says.

Most [new mothers](#) start to breast-feed, but more than half stop sooner than they'd like, according to ACOG, which recommends exclusive breast-feeding for at least the first six months of life.

"Moms deserve better [support](#), and obstetric providers can and must help, both by assisting their patients and by advocating for policies and practices that enable women to achieve their goals," Dr. Alison Stuebe, lead author of a new ACOG committee opinion, said in an ACOG news release.

The revised opinion was created to educate obstetricians on supporting women in making breast-feeding decisions and being a resource for breast-feeding women.

Obstetricians should start talking about breast-feeding with patients early in their pregnancy, get a breast-feeding history, and discuss any concerns or risk factors for breast-feeding, the experts said.

Additionally, [obstetricians](#) should respect and support a woman's informed decision whether to begin or continue breast-feeding, the committee opinion said.

Cesarean birth is associated with lower breast-feeding rates, the ACOG committee noted. So it advises that women who have [cesarean deliveries](#) may require extra support to start and maintain breast-feeding.

The new opinion also stated that ACOG "supports policies that protect the right of the woman and her child to breast-feed. Paid maternity leave, on-site child care, break time, and a location other than a bathroom for expressing milk are essential to sustaining breast-feeding."

The committee opinion is in the Feb. 2016 issue of *Obstetrics & Gynecology*.

More information: The U.S. Office on Women's Health has more about [breast-feeding](#).

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