

What causes women to stop breastfeeding early?

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A recent systematic literature review has investigated potential sociodemographic, physical, mental, and social factors that may cause breastfeeding mothers to stop breastfeeding before infants reach 6

months of age.

Mothers who were young, had a low level of education, and returned to work within 12 weeks after giving birth were more likely to stop [breastfeeding](#) before 6 months. Those who gave birth by [caesarean section](#) and who had an inadequate milk supply also tended to stop breastfeeding early.

The World Health Organization recommends exclusive breastfeeding as the main source of nutrition for infants during their first 6 months of life.

"Sociodemographic factors were seen to have caused cessation of breastfeeding in some of the included articles, and a focus should be placed on how to improve related knowledge of health-care professionals as it is clear that sociodemographic factors have an effect on health behavior," said Dr. Elisabeth Mangrio, lead author of the *Scandinavian Journal of Caring Sciences* review. "These factors should be considered through targeted interventions focusing on mothers who are at risk of ceasing breastfeeding before the recommended time and on known factors and behavior that can be prevented."

The study is published in *Scandinavian Journal of Caring Sciences*.

More information: Elisabeth Mangrio et al, Sociodemographic, physical, mental and social factors in the cessation of breastfeeding before 6 months: a systematic review, *Scandinavian Journal of Caring Sciences* (2017). [DOI: 10.1111/scs.12489](https://doi.org/10.1111/scs.12489)

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