

Longer duration of exclusive breastfeeding has protective effect on childhood asthma, says new study

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Pregnant women and new mothers are often presented with information on the benefits of breastfeeding their infants. A new study in *Annals of*

Allergy, Asthma and Immunology shows that a longer period of exclusive breastfeeding was associated with decreased odds of current asthma.

"The results of the study indicated that the longer a mother exclusively breastfed, the lower the relative odds of her child having [asthma](#), or asthma-related outcomes," said Keadrea Wilson, MD, lead author of the study and Assistant Professor of Neonatology at the University of Tennessee Health Science Center.

"There was a 'dose-response' effect depending on how long the mother breastfed: Babies that were breastfed for 2-4 months had only 64% likelihood of having as many asthma outcomes as those who were breastfed less than 2 months; those breastfed for 5-6 months had 61% likelihood, and those breastfed for more than 6 months had a 52% likelihood."

The study combined three studies to get a large number of subjects—more than 2,000 mother-child pairs. In addition, by combining the studies, the authors achieved a demographic distribution. For example, 38% of the respondents were Black and 6% were Hispanic/Latina.

"A further finding of the study was that duration of breastfeeding mixed with formula/juices/other foods (so not exclusively breastfed) did not provide the same level of protection," says allergist Angela Hogan, MD, vice chair of the ACAAI Asthma Committee. Dr. Hogan was not involved in the research. "Asthma runs in families, and according to the CDC, if a child has a parent with asthma, they are three to six times more likely to develop this condition than someone who does not have a parent with asthma. Anything a parent can do to lower the odds of their child getting asthma is worth considering."

"Our study strengthens current breastfeeding recommendations which

reflect recent analysis that show lower risk of asthma with more versus less [breastfeeding](#)," said Dr. Wilson.

More information: Keadrea Wilson et al, The association between duration of breastfeeding and childhood asthma outcomes, *Annals of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology* (2022). [DOI: 10.1016/j.anai.2022.04.034](#)

Provided by American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology (ACAAI)

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