

Longer exclusive breastfeeding may lower risk for childhood hematologic cancers

March 28 2024, by Lori Solomon



Exclusive breastfeeding duration of at least three months may decrease the risk for childhood hematologic cancers, according to a study published online March 26 in *JAMA Network Open*.

Signe Holst Sørensen, Ph.D., from the Danish Cancer Society in Copenhagen, and colleagues investigated whether longer duration of

exclusive breastfeeding is associated with a decreased risk for [childhood acute lymphoblastic leukemia](#) (ALL) and other childhood cancers. The analysis included administrative data for 309,473 children born between January 2005 and December 2018, identified from the Danish National Child Health Register.

The researchers found that compared with exclusive breastfeeding duration of less than three months, exclusive breastfeeding for at least three months was associated with a decreased risk for hematologic cancers (adjusted hazard ratio [aHR], 0.66; 95 percent confidence interval [CI], 0.46 to 0.95), which was largely attributable to a decreased risk for B-cell precursor ALL (BCP-ALL; aHR, 0.62; 95 percent CI, 0.39 to 0.99).

There were no associations between breastfeeding duration and risk for central nervous system tumors (aHR, 0.96; 95 percent CI, 0.51 to 1.88) or [solid tumors](#) (aHR, 0.87; 95 percent CI, 0.55 to 1.41).

"This finding is consistent with emerging investigations implicating early gut microbiome maturation in childhood BCP-ALL pathogenesis," the authors write. "To inform future preemptive interventions, additional studies should investigate the biologic mechanisms underlying the observed association."

More information: Signe Holst Søgaard et al, Exclusive Breastfeeding Duration and Risk of Childhood Cancers, *JAMA Network Open* (2024). [DOI: 10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2024.3115](https://doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2024.3115)

Helen D. Bailey, Exploring Exclusive Breastfeeding and Childhood Cancer Using Linked Data, *JAMA Network Open* (2024). [DOI: 10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2024.3075](https://doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2024.3075)

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