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# Reasons *for* Initial Formula Supplementation *of* Healthy Breastfeeding Newborns

Exclusive breastfeeding in the first 6 months of life is considered the gold standard for experiencing fully the benefits of breastfeeding. However, 24 percent of breastfeeding newborns in the United States receive formula in the first 2 days after birth (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2013). This early supplementation, which may take place before hospital discharge, has been associated with early weaning from breastfeeding (Murray, Ricketts, & Dellaport, 2007). Recognizing the importance of exclusive breastfeeding to health, the *Healthy People 2020* initiative set a goal that the proportion of breastfeeding newborns who receive formula supplementation in the first 2 days be reduced to 10 percent to support a second goal that 44.3 percent of infants be exclusively breastfed in the first 3 months (United States Department of Health and Human Services [USDHHS], 2010).

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**Abstract:** In a retrospective review of 302 hospital charts, 38 percent of newborns whose mothers planned to exclusively breastfeed received formula before hospital discharge. Those breastfeeding infants who did not receive formula were significantly younger at first breastfeeding than infants who received formula. Significantly more infants born by cesarean (51 percent) received supplementation than those born vaginally (31 percent). Birth between 9 p.m. and 10 a.m. and a hospital stay for more than 24 hours increased odds of supplementation. Nurses can explore barriers to exclusive breastfeeding unique to their hospitals to develop strategies that facilitate breastfeeding support and decrease formula supplementation. DOI: 10.1111/1751-486X.12120

**Keywords:** breastfeeding | formula supplementation | newborn | postpartum

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