# **Neonatal Nutrition**



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# **KEYWORDS**

Infant nutrition • Breastfeeding • Infant formula • Gastroesophageal reflux

# **KEY POINTS**

- There is good evidence of the clinical benefit of breastfeeding to infants and mothers, and it should be the primary nutrition source for most infants.
- The breastfed infant is the normative model for infant growth, and the WHO growth curves should be used for all term infants.
- All standard term infant formulas are clinically equivalent and adequately support growth for the small proportion of infants who cannot breastfeed.
- Soy and other specialized formulas should be reserved for particular circumstances and conditions and should not be used routinely.
- Gastroesophageal reflux occurs in most infants and does not require intervention. Gastroesophageal reflux disease occurs in a small proportion of infants and an algorithm-based evaluation and management strategy should be used.

#### **NEONATAL NUTRITION**

There is accumulating evidence that nutrition and growth in early life can have substantial influences on adult health.<sup>1</sup> This article reviews the current knowledge, recommendations, and approaches to feeding the normal newborn. The current understanding and approach to the common and sometimes difficult problem of gastroesophageal reflux (GER) in normal infants is also discussed.

# BREASTFEEDING

Based on the many demonstrated benefits for babies and mothers, the World Health Organization (WHO), the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), and Institute of Medicine recommend the exclusive use of human milk for healthy term infants for the first 6 months of life, and continued breastfeeding for at least 12 months.<sup>2</sup> The public health goal for Healthy People 2020 is for 82% of mothers to initiate breastfeeding, 60% of mothers to be breastfeeding at 6 months, and 34% to be breastfeeding at 1 year.<sup>3</sup> The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) tracks these

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Pediatr Clin N Am 62 (2015) 427–438 http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.pcl.2014.11.006 pediatric.theclinics.com 0031-3955/15/\$ – see front matter © 2015 Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. breastfeeding rates and issues a breastfeeding report card yearly.<sup>4</sup> Significant progress has been made toward achieving these breastfeeding goals, and in 2011 79% of women initiated breastfeeding. However, additional progress is necessary in the duration and exclusivity of breastfeeding. The most recent data on breastfeeding rates and the goals of Healthy People 2020 are shown in **Fig. 1**.

To support higher breastfeeding rates, additional objectives of Healthy People 2020 include increasing the proportion of employers that have worksite lactation support programs, reducing the number of breastfed newborns who receive formula supplementation within the first 2 days of life, and increasing the proportion of live births that occur in facilities that provide recommended care for lactating mothers and their babies.<sup>3</sup>

Although there has been progress in overall breastfeeding rates, these gains have not been uniform across all populations and geographic regions.<sup>5</sup> Breastfeeding rates are lower for black infants, infants of mothers with lower incomes, and mothers with less education.<sup>5–7</sup> Breastfeeding rates are lower in the southern United States and in rural areas.<sup>5,8</sup> Health care workers should be aware of these disparities so that they can focus their attention on these groups to educate about and support breastfeeding, and help others overcome barriers to breastfeeding.

#### Breastfeeding and Clinical Outcomes

There is growing evidence that breastfeeding conveys important benefits during childhood and in later adult life, and to breastfeeding mothers.<sup>9</sup> However, the evidence for these benefits comes almost entirely from observational cohort studies and not randomized clinical trials; randomized controlled trials of breastfeeding are widely



**Fig. 1.** US breastfeeding rates in 2011 (*red bars*) and Healthy People 2020 goals (*green bars*). BF, breastfed. (*Data from* National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. Breast feeding report card. Atlanta, GA: CDC, 2014. Available at: www.cdc.gov/pdf/2014breastfeedingreportcard.pdf. Accessed November 3, 2014.)

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