

MEMO / NOTE DE SERVICE

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TO: Board of Health for the City of Ottawa Health Unit

DESTINATAIRE : Conseil de santé de la circonscription sanitaire de la ville d'Ottawa

FROM: Dr. Isra Levy,
Ottawa Public Health

Contact :
Katherine Russell
Epidemiology
Ottawa Public Health
613-580-2424, ext. 29959
katherine.russell@ottawa.ca

EXPÉDITEUR : D^r Isra Levy,
Santé publique Ottawa

Personne ressource :
Katherine Russell
Épidémiologie
Santé publique Ottawa
613-580-2424, poste 29959
katherine.russell@ottawa.ca

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SUBJECT: **Release of the *Infant Feeding in Ottawa 2012 to 2014* report**

OBJET : **Publication du rapport intitulé *Alimentation des nourrissons à Ottawa, 2012 à 2014***

PURPOSE

The purpose of this memo is to advise you of the November 2, 2015 release of the [*Infant Feeding in Ottawa 2012 to 2014*](#) report / le rapport [*Alimentation des nourrissons à Ottawa 2012 à 2014*](#).

BACKGROUND

The *Infant Feeding in Ottawa 2012 to 2014* report, accompanying infographic: [Facts on Infant Feeding in Ottawa](#) / l'aperçu graphique: [Faits sur l'alimentation des nourrissons à Ottawa](#) and [English video](#) / [vidéo en français](#) presents local statistics on infant feeding. The report is intended to help inform local program planning and policy development as well as services for Ottawa families by sharing the report with local service providers who work with families during preconception, prenatal and the perinatal period, and those who work in child health. In addition, Ottawa Public Health (OPH) will use these results to inform a comprehensive breastfeeding strategy.

The *Infant Feeding in Ottawa 2012 to 2014* report contributes to ensuring OPH and local community partners have adequate, local, relevant information to inform program planning and policy development. It also contributes to data collection and monitoring requirements of the Baby-Friendly Initiative designation, a Public Health Funding and Accountability Agreement performance indicator and contributes to ensuring compliance under the Ontario Public Health Standards for population health assessment.

DISCUSSION

The report examines how Ottawa mothers intend to- and feed their infants from birth to 12 months of age, reasons for breastfeeding cessation, formula introduction and feeding solid foods, and intention to breastfeed future children. Highlights include the following:

- 95% of mothers tried to breastfeed their infant after birth and by six months of age, 68% were still breastfeeding. The main reasons for breastfeeding cessation before six months of age include a perceived or real inadequate milk supply (56%) and difficulty breastfeeding (24%).
- There is a drop in exclusive breastfeeding between discharge from hospital (60%) and two weeks of age (41%) and then between five (20%) and six months (8%) of age.¹
- 46% of breastfed infants are supplemented with formula in-hospital, 35% of mothers who intended to exclusively breastfeed fed formula on discharge, and 75% of all mothers feed formula before six months of age. The main reasons for

¹ The World Health Organization and Health Canada recommend that mothers exclusively breastfeed infants for the child's first six months of life to achieve optimal growth, development and health. Exclusive breastfeeding is defined as giving no other food or drink – not even water – to an infant, except breast milk. It does, however, allow the infant to receive oral rehydration salts, drops and syrups as medically necessary.

formula feeding before six months of age include a perceived or real inadequate milk supply (54%) and medical condition of mother or infant (18%).

- 69% of mothers introduce solids before six months of age.
- 25% of mothers are breastfeeding at 12 months. The main reasons for breastfeeding cessation between six and 12 months include a return to work/school (25%) and a perceived or real inadequate milk supply (22%).

NEXT STEPS

OPH is using the results of this report to inform a comprehensive breastfeeding strategy aimed at creating a breastfeeding friendly city. The report will be shared with partners including the Champlain Maternal Newborn Regional Program, hospitals and Community Health and Resource Centres to consider integrating these current local findings into their programs and practices and to identify opportunities for collaboration.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you,

‘Original signed by’

Dr./ D^r Isra Levy

Medical Officer of Health | Médecin chef en santé publique

Ottawa Public Health | Santé publique Ottawa