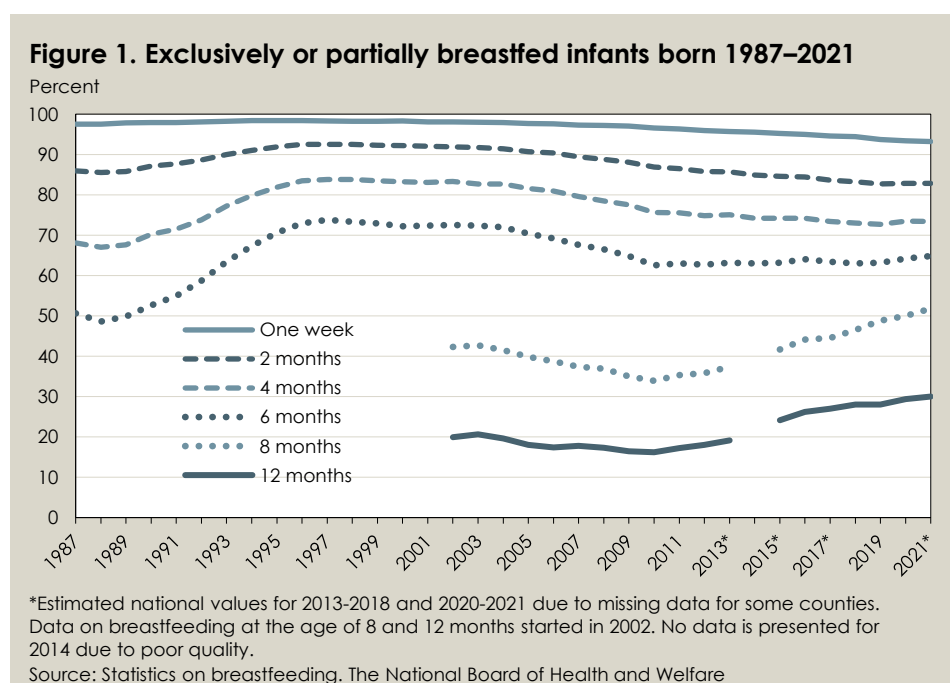


Statistics on breastfeeding 2021

Breastfeeding during the infant's first months continues to decrease slightly, while the proportion of infants who are breastfed at the age of six months has remained largely unchanged since 2010. However, it is becoming increasingly common for infants to be breastfed at the age of eight months. The regional differences in the proportion of breastfed are most pronounced among infants aged six months and above.

Breastfeeding of eight- and twelve-months-old infants is increasing

In the last thirty-five years, the proportion of infants in Sweden who are breastfed has been the highest during the period of 1995–2004 (Figure 1). At that time, about 83 percent of all infants were breastfed at four months of age and around 72 percent at six months of age. Thereafter, the proportion of breastfed infants decreased for a few years. Since 2010, the proportion of infants breastfed at six months of age has increased slightly to 65 percent in 2021. For infants younger than six months, the proportion has continued to decline slightly even in recent years. For children born 2021 the proportion of breastfeeding was 93 percent among one- week-old infants, while the corresponding proportion for two-month-old infants has been around 83 percent during the last five years.



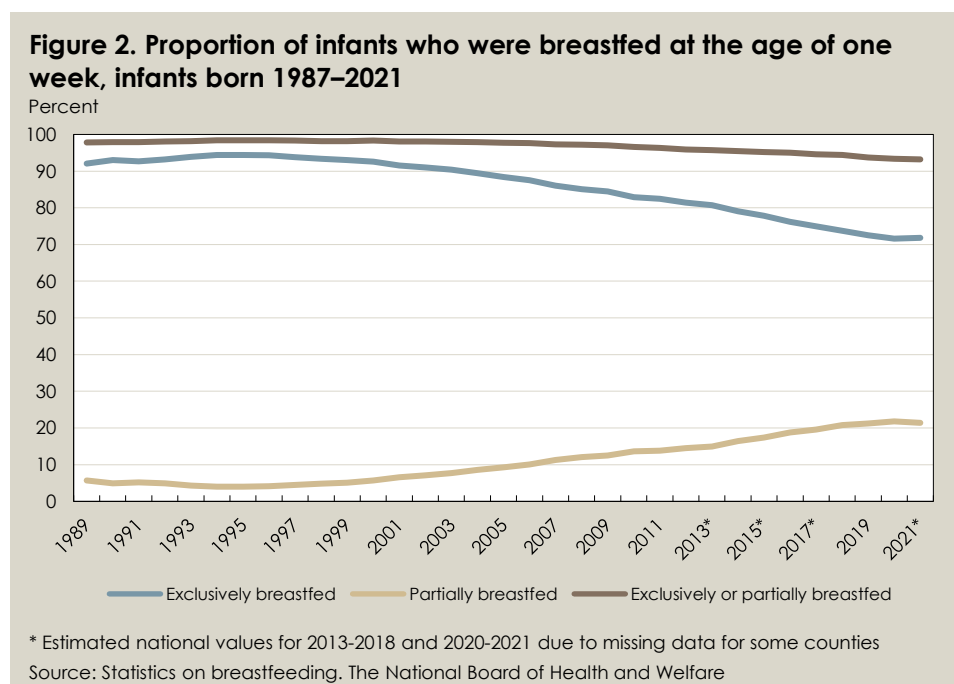
For 2021 data are missing for the counties Södermanland, Blekinge, Örebro, Västmanland, Dalarnas and Västernorrland. This constitutes a total statistical

loss of about 14 percent of children born in 2021. Estimated national values are calculated from the latest available data.

Breastfeeding of infants older than six months has increased slightly since 2010. Among eight-month-old infants, the proportion of breastfed has increased from 34 percent in 2010 to 52 percent in 2021. For twelve-month-old infants, the proportion has increased from 16 percent to 30 percent during the same period. At twelve months of age, almost all infants who are breastfed also receive other types of food.

Exclusive breastfeeding of newborns is decreasing

The proportion of infants who are exclusively breastfed at one week of age has decreased gradually in the last twenty-five years. For children born in 1997 around 94 percent of infants were exclusively breastfed, and in 2021 the corresponding figure was 72 percent. During the same period, the proportion of infants who were partially breastfed increased, from 5 percent to 21 percent. Overall, the number of infants who are breastfed, either exclusively or partially, has decreased slightly, from 98 percent for children born in 1997 to 93 percent for children born in 2021 (see figure 2).



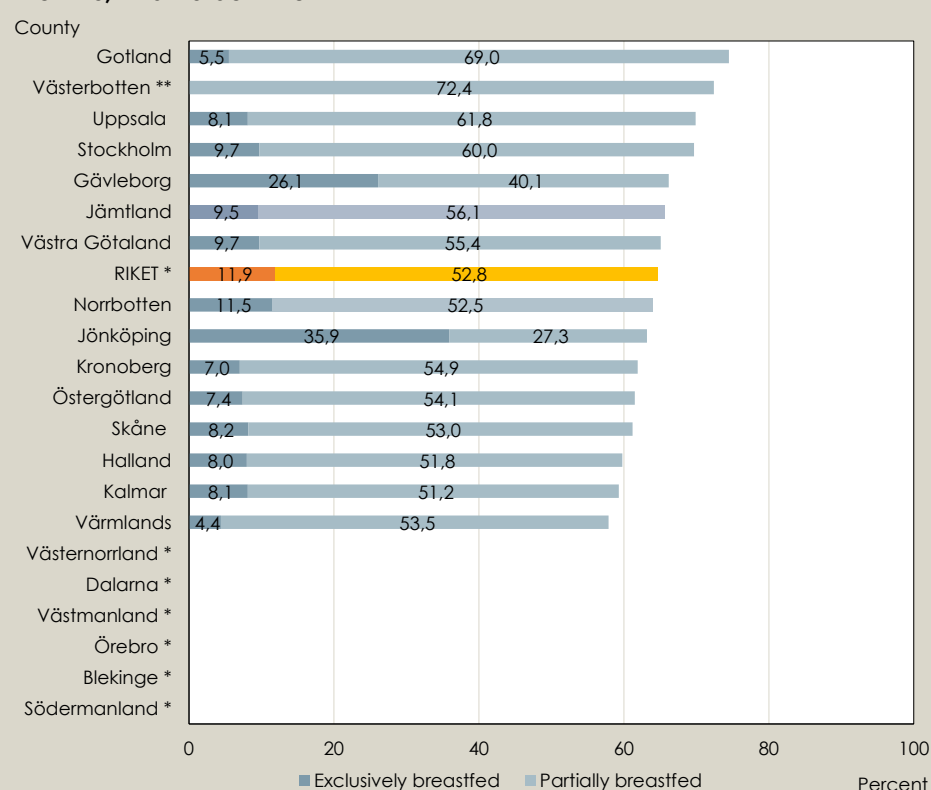
There has been a similar reduction in exclusive breastfeeding among two-month-old infants in the last twenty-five years to 61 percent for children born in 2021. The corresponding proportion was 81 percent for children born in 1997. Partial breastfeeding on the other hand, has increased during the same period from 12 percent for children born 1997 to 22 percent in 2021. But the past year we see a

slight increase of 0,5 percent units for exclusive breastfeeding and a slight decrease for partially breastfeeding. Also, in this age group, the proportion of infants who were breastfed, exclusively or partially, has decreased slightly during the same period, from 93 percent in 1997 to 83 percent 2021. At the age of four months, 73 percent of children born 2021 were exclusively or partially breastfed, while the corresponding figure for six-month-olds was 65 percent.

Proportion of breastfed varies between counties

The differences between counties regarding breastfeeding are relatively small when it comes to the youngest infants. The proportion of infants who were breastfed at one week of age, exclusively or partially, varied for children born in 2021 between 96 percent in the county of Uppsala and 90 percent in the county of Värmland. At six months of age, the differences between the counties were larger (figure 3). The county of Gotland had the highest proportion of infants who were breastfed, 75 percent, compared to the county of Värmland where 58 percent of the infants were breastfed.

Figure 3. Proportion of infants who were breastfed at the age of 6 months, infants born 2021



*Missing data for several counties 2021. National values are estimated from the latest available data.

**For Västerbotten County only the total of exclusively breastfed and partially breastfed are presented 2021 due to quality problems.

Source: Statistics on breastfeeding. The National Board of Health and Welfare

Definitions

Exclusively breastfed refers to infants who have been fed only breastmilk and vitamins (e.g. vitamin D) or medicines

Partially breastfed refers infants who, apart from breastmilk, have also received infant formula, formula or other food.

Breastfeeding refers to both infants who are exclusively breastfed and infants who are partially breastfed.

New definition from the year 2004

The current definition has been in effect since 2004 and is in accordance with the recommendations issued by the WHO. Before 2004, children who were given small samples of other food in addition to breast milk were also included in the category *exclusively breastfed*. Statistics concerning exclusive and partial breastfeeding are therefore not completely comparable to years before 2004

More information

You can find more tables, diagrams and other information in the Excel file: www.socialstyrelsen.se/en/statistics-and-data/statistics/

If you want to use our statistical database (in Swedish):

https://sdb.socialstyrelsen.se/if_amn/

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