

## 2.24 Breastfeeding practices

**The breastfeeding status of Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander infants, breastfeeding duration, breastfeeding and other sources of food and reasons mothers stopped breastfeeding**

### Data sources

Data for this measure come from the 2004–05 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey (NATSIHS) and 2008 NATSISS.

### National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey

The 2004–05 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey (NATSIHS) collected information from 10,439 Indigenous Australians of all ages. This sample was considerably larger than the supplementary Indigenous samples in the 1995 and 2001 National Health Surveys. The survey was conducted in remote and non-remote areas of Australia and collected a range of information from Indigenous Australians. This included information on health-related actions, health risk factors, health status, socioeconomic circumstances and women's health. The survey provides comparisons over time in the health of Indigenous Australians. It is planned to repeat the NATSIHS at 6-yearly intervals, with the next NATSIHS to be conducted in 2011–12. Selected non-Indigenous comparisons are available through the 2004–05 National Health Survey (NHS).

### Definitions of breastfeeding terms

**Breastfeeding.** The child receives some breastmilk but can also receive any food or liquid including non-human milk.

**Breastfeeding duration.** The total length of time an infant received any breastmilk at all from initiation until weaning is complete.

**Ever breastfed.** An infant has been put to the breast, even if only once, and/or an infant has received expressed breastmilk but has never been put to the breast.

**Exclusively breastfed.** An infant has received only breastmilk from his/her mother or a wet nurse or expressed breastmilk and no other liquids or solids with the exception of drops or syrups consisting of vitamins, mineral supplements or medicines.

**Predominantly breastfed.** An infant's predominant source of nourishment has been breastmilk but the infant has also received water and water-based drinks (sweetened and flavoured water, teas, infusions, etc.); fruit juice; oral rehydration solution; drops and syrup forms of vitamins, minerals and medicines; and/or ritual foods (in limited quantities). All other food-based fluids are excluded, in particular non-human milk.

**Fully breastfed.** An infant is fully breastfed if he/she receives breastmilk as the main source of nourishment. This includes infants who are either (a) exclusively breastfed or (b) predominantly breastfed – that is, infants with no other liquids or solids (except vitamins, mineral supplements, or medicines) or infants who receive breastmilk and water, water-based drinks, fruit juice, oral rehydration solution, but do not receive breast milk substitutes or solids. The fully breastfed rate is the combined rate of exclusively breastfed and predominantly breastfed (Webb et al. 2001).

## National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) conducted the 2002 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey (NATSISS) between August 2002 and April 2003. The 2008 NATSISS was conducted between August 2008 and April 2009. The survey provides information about the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations of Australia for a wide range of areas of social concern including health, education, culture and labour force participation. The 2008 NATSISS included for the first time children aged under 15. The NATSISS will be conducted every six years, with the next survey planned for 2014.

The 2008 NATSISS collected information by personal interview from 13,300 Indigenous Australians across all states and territories of Australia, including those living in remote areas. The sample covered persons aged 15 years and over who are usual residents in selected private dwellings. It collected information on a wide range of subjects including family and culture, health, education, employment, income, financial stress, housing, and law and justice.

## Data analyses

### Breastfeeding status

- In 2008, approximately 77% of Indigenous infants aged 0–3 years had ever been breastfed (Table 2.14.1; Figure 2.24.1) and 21% of Indigenous infants were currently being breastfed.
- In 2008, Approximately 34% of Indigenous infants had breastfeeding stopped at less than 6 months, and 22% had it stopped at 6 months or older (Table 2.24.1).
- In 2004–05, approximately 79% of Indigenous infants aged 0–3 years had ever been breastfed compared with 88% of non-Indigenous infants (Table 2.24.2).
- Approximately 13% of Indigenous infants were currently being breastfed compared with 16% of non-Indigenous infants (Table 2.24.2).
- A similar proportion of Indigenous and non-Indigenous infants had been breastfed for 12 months or more (13% and 14%, respectively) (Table 2.24.2).
- The maximum duration of breastfeeding among fully breastfed children was 130 weeks for Indigenous children compared with 156 weeks for non-Indigenous children (Table 2.24.2).

### Breastfeeding status by state/territory

- In South Australia lower proportion of Indigenous infants had ever been breastfed (70%) than in any other jurisdiction (Table 2.24.1; Figure 2.24.1).
- In the Northern Territory, a lower proportion of Indigenous infants had breastfeeding stopped at less than 6 months (13%) than in any other jurisdiction (Table 2.24.1).
- In Queensland, a significantly lower proportion of Indigenous infants had ever been breastfed (79%) compared with non-Indigenous infants (89%) (Table 2.24.2).

**Table 2.24.1: Breastfeeding status, by state/territory, Indigenous persons, infants aged 0–3 years, 2008**

<b>Breastfeeding measure</b>	<b>NSW/ACT</b>	<b>Vic</b>	<b>Qld</b>	<b>WA</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>Tas</b>	<b>NT</b>	<b>Australia</b>
	<b>Per cent</b>							
Child breastfed								
Currently breastfeeding	12.7	14.4	17.8	30.6	16.0 <sup>(a)</sup>	6.7 <sup>(a)</sup>	51.0	20.7
Not currently breastfeeding	87.3	85.6	82.2	69.4	84.0	93.3	49.0	79.3
<b>Age child stopped being completely breastfed</b>								
Less than 6 months	38.6	39.4	36.0	28.3	37.4	35.2	13.1	33.7
Between 6 and 12 months	11.9 <sup>(a)</sup>	11.0	10.7 <sup>(a)</sup>	7.4 <sup>(a)</sup>	9.9 <sup>(a)</sup>	20.2	5.6 <sup>(a)</sup>	10.4
12 months or older	4.5 <sup>(a)</sup>	13.4	14.9	18.0	6.6 <sup>(a)</sup>	11.4 <sup>(a)</sup>	15.8	11.6
Total <sup>(b)</sup>	55.8	65.9	62.4	54.1	54.2	66.8	36.9	56.6
<i>Total breastfed<sup>(c)</sup></i>	<i>68.5</i>	<i>80.3</i>	<i>80.3</i>	<i>84.7</i>	<i>70.1</i>	<i>73.5</i>	<i>88.2</i>	<i>77.3</i>
Never breastfed	31.5	19.7	19.7	15.3	29.9	26.5 <sup>(a)</sup>	11.8 <sup>(a)</sup>	22.7
<b>Total<sup>(d)</sup></b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Total number<sup>(d)</sup></b>	<b>16,133</b>	<b>3,322</b>	<b>16,385</b>	<b>6,623</b>	<b>2,759</b>	<b>1,818</b>	<b>5,608</b>	<b>52,648</b>
Median age at which child stopped being completely breastfed (weeks)	13	17	17	22	9	22	39	17
Mean age at which child stopped being completely breastfed (weeks)	18	25	29	36	19	31	45	27

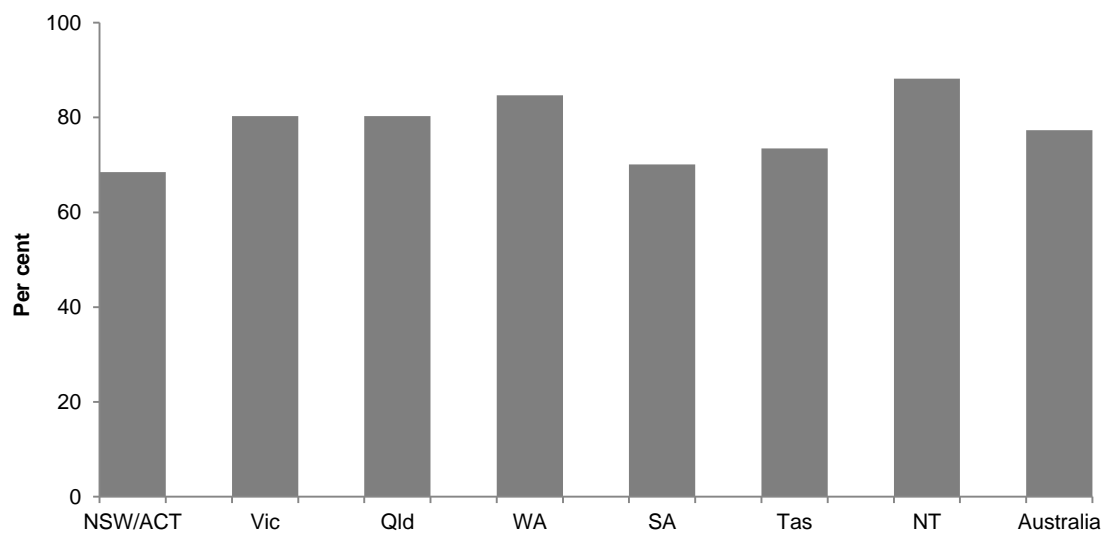
(a) Estimate has a relative standard error between 25% and 50% and should be used with caution.

(b) Includes age at which child stopped breastfeeding not stated.

(c) Includes not known if child currently breastfed.

(d) Excludes children for whom breastfeeding status was not known.

Source: 2008 NATSISS.



Source: 2008 NATSISS

**Figure 2.24.1: Total breastfed, by state/territory, Indigenous persons, infants aged 0-3 years, 2008**

Table 2.24.2: Breastfeeding status, by state/territory and Indigenous status, infants aged 0–3 years in non-remote areas, 2004–05

Breastfeeding measure	NSW		Vic		Qld		WA		SA		Tas		ACT		NT <sup>(a)</sup>		Australia	
	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Indig.	Non-Indig.	Indig.	Non-Indig.
<b>Per cent</b>																		
<b>Child has been breastfed</b>																		
0 to less than 6 months	35	33	43	39	31	39	22	34	27	33	51	35	41	29	32	n.p.	33	36
For 6 to 12 months	21	25	22 <sup>(c)</sup>	25	19 <sup>(b)</sup>	20	14 <sup>(b)</sup>	16	16 <sup>(c)</sup>	19	15 <sup>(b)</sup>	18	16 <sup>(b)</sup>	24	15 <sup>(b)</sup>	n.p.	19	22
For 12 months or more <sup>(d)</sup>	11	13	10 <sup>(c)</sup>	14	18 <sup>(b)</sup>	13	15 <sup>(b)</sup>	16	10 <sup>(c)</sup>	17	9 <sup>(c)</sup>	15	17 <sup>(b)</sup>	23 <sup>(b)</sup>	13 <sup>(b)</sup>	n.p.	13	14
Currently breastfeeding	8 <sup>(f)</sup>	13	9 <sup>(b)</sup>	15	12 <sup>(b)</sup>	17	30 <sup>(b)</sup>	24	18 <sup>(c)</sup>	13	11 <sup>(c)</sup>	17	17 <sup>(b)</sup>	21 <sup>(b)</sup>	29 <sup>(b)</sup>	n.p.	13	16
<i>Ever breastfed</i>	76	84	84	93	79*	89*	81	90	70	81	86	86	92	96	89	n.p.	79*	88*
Never breastfed	24	16	15 <sup>(b)</sup>	7*	20	10	19 <sup>(b)</sup>	10 <sup>(b)</sup>	30 <sup>(b)</sup>	19	14 <sup>(b)</sup>	14 <sup>(f)</sup>	5 <sup>(c)</sup>	4 <sup>(b)</sup>	11 <sup>(b)</sup>	n.p.	21*	12*
<b>Total<sup>(e)</sup></b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>n.p.</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Total no. of infants</b>	<b>13,418</b>	<b>310,805</b>	<b>2,373</b>	<b>240,930</b>	<b>10,325</b>	<b>182,712</b>	<b>3,552</b>	<b>85,191</b>	<b>2,019</b>	<b>69,745</b>	<b>1,762</b>	<b>22,526</b>	<b>433</b>	<b>16,702</b>	<b>1,082</b>	<b>4,402</b>	<b>34,964</b>	<b>933,013</b>
<b>Weeks</b>																		
Maximum duration of breastfeeding among fully breastfed children (weeks) <sup>(f)</sup>	78 <sup>(g)</sup>	104 <sup>(g)</sup>	56 <sup>(g)</sup>	104 <sup>(g)</sup>	117 <sup>(g)</sup>	87 <sup>(g)</sup>	83 <sup>(g)</sup>	109 <sup>(g)</sup>	52 <sup>(g)</sup>	104 <sup>(g)</sup>	65 <sup>(g)</sup>	84 <sup>(g)</sup>	78 <sup>(g)</sup>	70 <sup>(g)</sup>	78 <sup>(g)</sup>	n.p.	130	156
Minimum duration of breastfeeding among fully breastfed children (weeks) <sup>(f)</sup>	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	n.p.	1	1

(continued)

**Table 2.24.2 (continued): Breastfeeding status, by state/territory and Indigenous status, infants aged 0–3 years in non-remote areas, 2004–05**

\* Represents results with statistically significant differences in the Indigenous/non-Indigenous comparisons.

- (a) Non-Indigenous results are not provided because the non-Indigenous sample for this area was insufficient for purposes of estimation of these characteristics.
- (b) Estimate has a relative standard error of between 25% and 50% and should be used with caution.
- (c) Estimate has a relative standard error greater than 50% and are considered too unreliable for general use.
- (d) Includes length of time child has been breastfed not known.
- (e) Includes breastfeeding status not known.
- (f) Excludes children currently breastfed and children who had been fully breastfed for less than 1 week.
- (g) Indicates that the maximum length of time breastfed in weeks is greater than this value, but for confidentiality reasons the maximum length of time cannot be released.

Source: ABS and AIHW analysis of 2004–05 NATSIHS and 2004–05 NHS.

### **Breastfeeding status by remoteness**

- In 2008, around 27% of Indigenous infants aged 0–3 years were currently being breastfed, 73% had previously been breastfed but not currently, and 23% had never been breastfed (Table 2.24.3).
- Breastfeeding status varied by remoteness, with a higher proportion of Indigenous infants in remote areas currently being breastfed than those in non-remote areas (Figure 2.24.2). Around 48% of Indigenous infants in remote areas were currently being breastfed, 86% had previously been breastfed and 14% had never been breastfed. This compared with 20%, 75% and 25% respectively of Indigenous infants in non-remote areas.
- At ages 0–6 months, 6–12 months and 1–3 years, a higher proportion of Indigenous infants in remote areas were breastfeeding than those in non-remote areas.

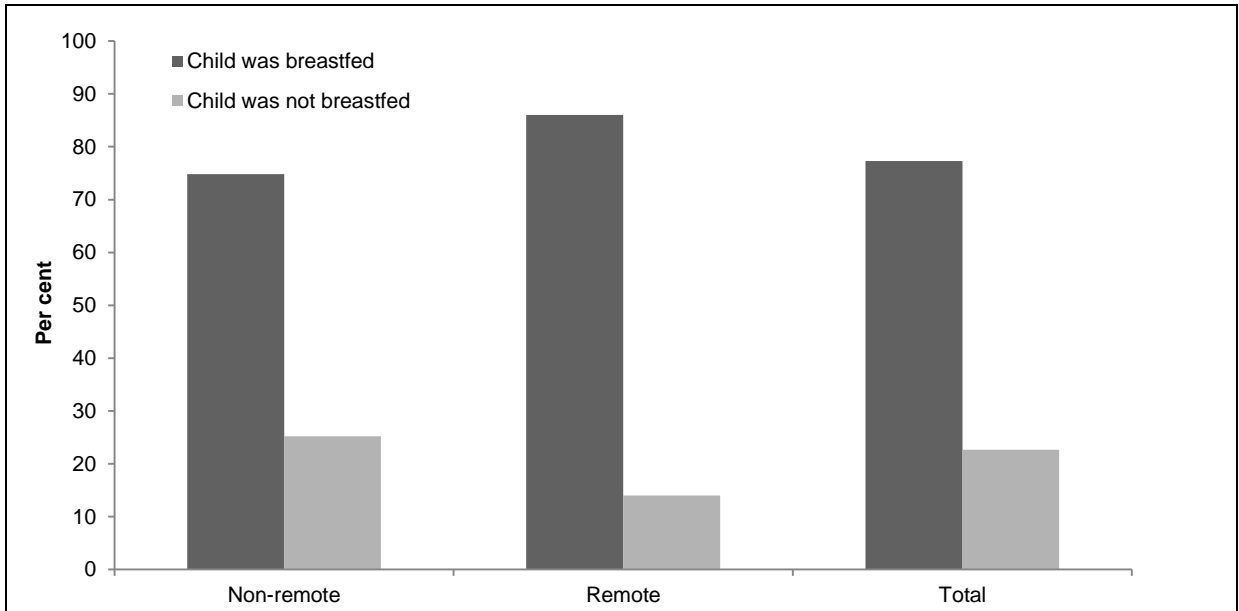
Table 2.24.3: Breastfeeding status, by remoteness and age of infant, Indigenous persons aged 0–3 years, 2008

Breastfeeding status	Less than 12 months			12 to < 24 months			24 to < 36 months			36 to < 48 months			Total aged 0–3 years		
	Non-remote	Remote	Total	Non-remote	Remote	Total	Non-remote	Remote	Total	Non-remote	Remote	Total	Non-remote	Remote	Total
Per cent															
Currently breastfeeding	54.6	70.4	58.5	14.9	65.4	27.7	3.2	34.8	10.2	1.8	17.1	6.0	19.9	47.5	26.8
Child not currently breastfeeding	45.4	29.6	41.5	85.1	34.6	72.3	96.8	65.2	89.8	98.2	82.9	94.0	80.1	52.5	73.2
<b>Total<sup>(a)</sup></b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Whether child was ever breastfed</b>															
Child was breastfed	77.7	87.9	80.0	77.6	88.5	80.1	72.4	78.6	73.7	71.2	88.3	75.2	74.8	86.0	77.3
Child was not breastfed	22.3	12.1	20.0	22.4	11.5	19.9	27.6	21.4	26.3	28.8	11.7	24.8	25.2	14.0	22.7
<b>Total<sup>(a)</sup></b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Not known if child was ever breastfed	0.1	1.2	0.4	1.9	0.6	1.6	1.4	4.0	2.0	6.2	1.3	5.1	2.4	1.8	2.3
<b>Total no. of infants</b>	<b>10,822.0</b>	<b>3,172.0</b>	<b>13,994.0</b>	<b>9,984.0</b>	<b>2,931.0</b>	<b>12,915.0</b>	<b>10,203.0</b>	<b>2,765.0</b>	<b>12,968.0</b>	<b>10,890.0</b>	<b>3,113.0</b>	<b>14,003.0</b>	<b>41,899.0</b>	<b>11,981.0</b>	<b>53,880.0</b>

(a) Excludes not known responses

Source: 2008 NATSISS.





Source: 2008 NATSISS.

**Figure 2.24.2: Whether child was ever breastfed, by remoteness, Indigenous children aged 0-3 years, 2008**

### Breastfeeding status when first taken home from hospital

- In 2004-2005, approximately 96% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander infants aged 0-3 years in non-remote areas were breastfed when they were first taken home from hospital (Table 2.24.4).
- The proportion ranged from 89% in the Australian Capital Territory to 98% in the Northern Territory.

**Table 2.24.4: Breastfeeding status when first taken home from hospital, by state/territory, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander infants aged 0–3 years who were breastfed, non-remote areas, 2004–2005**

	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Australia
	Per cent								
Breastfed when first taken home	97	96	95	96	92	95	89	98	96
Not breastfed when first taken home	2 <sup>(a)</sup>	4 <sup>(a)</sup>	—	3 <sup>(a)</sup>	2 <sup>(a)</sup>	4 <sup>(a)</sup>	11 <sup>(a)</sup>	—	2 <sup>(b)</sup>
No hospital	—	—	—	1 <sup>(a)</sup>	—	— <sup>(a)</sup>	—	2 <sup>(a)</sup>	— <sup>(a)</sup>
<b>Total ever breastfed</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Total number ever breastfed</b>	<b>10,186</b>	<b>1,983</b>	<b>8,014</b>	<b>2,871</b>	<b>1,449</b>	<b>1,507</b>	<b>396</b>	<b>962</b>	<b>27,369</b>

(a) Estimate has a relative standard error greater than 50% and is considered too unreliable for general use.

(b) Estimate has a relative standard error of between 25% and 50% and should be used with caution.

Source: ABS and AIHW analysis of 2004–05 NATSIHS.

## Additional information

### Breastfeeding and other sources of food

- In 2008, around 65% of Indigenous infants aged less than 6 months were never given solid food and around 35% were given solid food (Table 2.24.5).

**Table 2.24.5: Whether infant ever given solid food, Indigenous infants aged less than 6 months, 2008**

	Number	Proportion (per cent)
Infant given solid food	2,606	34.7
Infant never given solid food	4,897	65.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,503</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: 2008 NATSISS.

### Age at which first given solid food

- Over the period 2004–05, Indigenous infants aged 0–3 months in non-remote areas were almost twice as likely to be given solid food as non-Indigenous infants (18% compared with 10%) (Table 2.24.6).
- Over the same period, Indigenous infants aged 3–6 months and 6–9 months in non-remote areas were less likely to be given solid food than non-Indigenous infants of the same age (Table 2.24.6).
- In 2008, the majority of Indigenous infants were first given solid food between the ages of 3 and 6 months (43%) and between 6 and 9 months (30%). (Table 2.24.7).
- In 2008, the age at which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged 0-3 years were given solid food regularly varied between remoteness areas. In Remote areas, the majority (39%) were first given solid food between 6 and 9 months of age. In Non-remote areas the majority (50%) were first given solid food between 3 and 6 months of age (Table 2.24.8).

**Table 2.24.6: Age at which first given solid food regularly, by Indigenous status, persons aged 0–3 years in non-remote areas, 2004–05**

	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	Ratio
	%	%	
1–<3 months	18	10	1.8*
3–<6 months	34	40	0.9*
6–<9 months	28	34	0.8*
9+ months	8	6	1.3
<i>Total given solid food<sup>(a)</sup></i>	91	90	1.0
Solid food not given regularly	8	10	0.8
<b>Total<sup>(b)</sup></b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>..</b>
<b>Total persons</b>	<b>34,964</b>	<b>933,013</b>	<b>..</b>

\* Represents results with statistically significant differences in the Indigenous/non-Indigenous comparisons.

(a) Includes age first given solid food not known.

(b) Includes whether given solid food not known.

Source: ABS and AIHW analysis of 2004–05 NATSIHS and 2004–05 NHS.

**Table 2.24.7: Age at which first given solid food regularly, Indigenous children aged 0–3 years<sup>(a)</sup>, 2008**

	Indigenous
	Per cent
1 week to <3 months	4.8
3 to <6 months	43.0
6 to <9 months	30.1
9+ months	8.1
Age not known	4.9
<i>Total given solid food<sup>(a)</sup></i>	<i>86.0</i>
Solid food not given <sup>(b)</sup>	9.1
<b>Total<sup>(c)</sup></b>	<b>100.0</b>

(a) Children who have been given solid food regularly.

(b) Excludes whether given solid food 'unknown'.

(c) Includes age infant first given solid food not stated.

Source: 2008 NATSISS.

**Table 2.24.8: Age at which first given solid food regularly, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander infants aged 0-3 years and remoteness, 2008**

	Remote		Non-Remote		Persons	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
0-<3 months	381	3.3	2,163	5.4	2,544	5.0
3-<6 months	3,269	28.8	19,964	50.1	23,232	45.4
6-<9 months	4,474	39.4	11,733	29.4	16,206	31.6
9+ months	2,212	19.5	2,137	5.4	4,350	8.5
<i>Total given solid food</i>	<i>10,335</i>	<i>90.9</i>	<i>35,997</i>	<i>90.3</i>	<i>46,332</i>	<i>90.4</i>
Solid food not given regularly	1,031	9.1	3,865	9.7	4,897	9.6
<b>Total<sup>(a)</sup></b>	<b>11,366</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>39,862</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>51,228</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Not stated	615	5.1	2,038	4.9	2,652	4.9

(a) Excludes not stated responses.

Source: 2008 NATSISS.

### Reasons for stopping breastfeeding

- In 2004-05, the main reason mothers of Indigenous infants aged 0-3 years in non-remote areas stopped breastfeeding was that they were no longer producing any or adequate milk (32%). Approximately 21% of Indigenous infants were no longer breastfed because mothers felt it was time to stop, and for 6% the mother was pregnant again (Table 2.24.9) Approximately 16% of Indigenous infants were no longer breastfed because of other problems with breastfeeding (for example, cracked nipples).

**Table 2.24.9: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander infants aged 0-3 years, by main reason stopped breastfeeding, non-remote areas, 2004-05**

Main reason stopped breastfeeding	Per cent
Not producing any/adequate milk	32
Felt it was time to stop	21
Pregnant	6 <sup>(a)</sup>
Teething	5 <sup>(a)</sup>
Resumed work	4 <sup>(a)</sup>
Child bored	1 <sup>(b)</sup>
Other problems with breastfeeding (e.g. cracked nipples)	16
Not stated	2 <sup>(b)</sup>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Total no. of infants</b>	<b>22,941</b>

(a) Estimate has a relative standard error of between 25% and 50% and should be used with caution.

(b) Estimate has a relative standard error greater than 50% and is considered too unreliable for general use.

Source: ABS and AIHW analysis of 2004-05 NATSIHS.

## **Breastfeeding by selected population and risk factors**

- In 2008, 17% of Indigenous infants aged 0–3 years in the lowest (1st) income quintile were never breastfed, compared with 2.5% in the highest income quintile. Around 14% in the lowest (1st) socioeconomic (SEIFA) quintile were never breastfed, compared with only 0.5% of Indigenous infants in the highest quintile (Table 2.24.10a).
- The proportion of Indigenous infants ever breastfed was similar regardless of whether the house was owned or rented (45% compared with 44%) (Table 2.24.10a).
- Approximately 73% of Indigenous infants who were never breastfed were living in a household with at least one regular smokers compared with 63% of Indigenous infants who were breastfed (Table 2.24.10b).

**Table 2.24.10a: Selected household characteristics by breastfeeding status, Indigenous infants aged 0–3 years, 2008**

	Breastfeeding measure: child has been breastfed <sup>(a)</sup>						Total
	0 to less than 6 months	For 6 months to 12 months	12 months or more <sup>(b)</sup>	Currently breastfeeding	<i>Ever breastfed</i>	<i>Never breastfed</i>	
	Per cent						
<b>Household income</b>							
1st quintile (lowest)	18.4	6.0	4.7	12.0	41.5	17.3	100.0
5th quintile (highest)	20.3	6.2	14.0	8.2	48.8	2.5	100.0
<b>SEIFA (Socio-economic index for areas)<sup>(c)</sup></b>							
1st quintile (lowest)	18.0	5.2	6.3	12.9	43.2	14.2	100.0
5th quintile (highest)	21.0	8.5	2.6	16.0	51.4	0.5	100.0
<b>Housing</b>							
Owner	22.0	7.1	6.3	9.3	45.2	10.1	100.0
Renter	18.3	5.6	6.7	12.3	43.5	13.6	100.0
<b>Regular smoker in households</b>							
Yes	18.6	5.0	7.0	11.9	42.9	14.6	100.0
No	21.0	7.9	5.9	10.5	45.9	8.8	100.0
<b>All infants aged 0–3 years</b>	<b>19.1</b>	<b>5.9</b>	<b>6.6</b>	<b>11.7</b>	<b>43.8</b>	<b>12.9</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Total no. of infants 0–3 years</b>	<b>17,723</b>	<b>5,473</b>	<b>6,086</b>	<b>10,892</b>	<b>40,696</b>	<b>11,952</b>	<b>92,822</b>

(a) Based on age stopped breastfeeding.

(b) Includes length of time child has been breastfed not known.

(c) SEIFA refers to Socio-economic Indexes for Areas developed by the ABS. The SEIFA Indexes allow ranking of regions/areas which provide a method of determining the level of socioeconomic wellbeing in that region.

Source: 2008 NATSISS.

**Table 2.24.10b: Breastfeeding status by selected household characteristics, Indigenous infants aged 0–3 years, 2008**

	Breastfeeding measure: Child has been breastfed <sup>(a)</sup>					
	0 to less than 6 months	For 6 months to less than 12 months	12 months or more <sup>(b)</sup>	Currently breastfeeding	<i>Ever breastfed</i>	Never breastfed
	Per cent					
<b>Household income</b>						
1st quintile (lowest)	46.4	49.4	34.3	49.4	45.6	64.5
5th quintile (highest)	4.9	4.8	9.8	3.2	5.1	0.9
<b>SEIFA (Socio-economic index for areas)<sup>(c)</sup></b>						
1st quintile (lowest)	52.0	48.8	52.9	60.7	54.3	60.9
5th quintile (highest)	3.3	4.4	1.2	4.1	3.6	0.1
<b>Housing</b>						
Owner	22.9	23.9	19.1	15.8	20.5	15.6
Renter	75.3	74.3	80.7	82.0	77.8	82.6
<b>Regular smoker in households</b>						
Yes	62.3	54.0	67.9	65.0	62.7	72.6
No	36.9	44.8	30.3	30.0	35.1	23.1
<b>All infants aged 0–3 years</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Total no. of infants 0–3 years</b>	<b>17,723</b>	<b>5,473</b>	<b>6,086</b>	<b>10,892</b>	<b>40,696</b>	<b>11,952</b>

(a) Based on age stopped breastfeeding.

(b) Includes length of time child has been breastfed not known.

(c) SEIFA refers to Socio-economic Indexes for Areas developed by the ABS. The SEIFA Indexes allow ranking of regions/areas which provide a method of determining the level of socioeconomic wellbeing in that region.

Source: 2008 NATSISS.



## **Data quality issues**

### **National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey**

The NATSIHS uses the standard Indigenous status question. The NATSIHS sample was specifically designed to select a representative sample of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. It has therefore overcome the problem inherent in most national surveys with small and unrepresentative Indigenous samples. As with other surveys, the NATSIHS is subject to sampling and non-sampling errors. Calculations of standard errors and significance testing help to identify the accuracy of the estimates and differences.

Information recorded in this survey is essentially 'as reported' by respondents. The ABS makes every effort to collect accurate information from respondents, particularly through careful questionnaire design, pre-testing of questionnaires, use of trained interviewers and assistance from Indigenous facilitators. Nevertheless, some responses may be affected by imperfect recall or individual interpretation of survey questions.

Non-Indigenous comparisons are available through the National Health Survey (NHS). The NHS was conducted in *Major cities, Inner and outer regional areas* and *Remote and very remote areas*, but *Very remote* areas were excluded from the sample. Time series comparisons are available through the 1995 and 2001 NHS.

In *Remote and very remote* communities there were some modifications to the NATSIHS content in order to accommodate language and cultural appropriateness in traditional communities and help respondents understand the concepts. Some questions were excluded and some reworded. Also, paper forms were used in communities in remote areas and computer-assisted interview (CAI) instruments were used in non-remote areas. The CAI process included built-in edit checks and sequencing.

Further information on NATSIHS data quality issues can be found in the NATSIHS 2004–05 publication (ABS 2006a).

### **Breastfeeding data**

The following points should be considered when interpreting data on breastfeeding from the NATSIHS:

- The sample size of infants less than 6 months of age will affect the reliability of estimates.
- Information is 'as reported' by respondents. No analysis has been undertaken regarding the accuracy of these reported data and whether the accuracy of recall by the adult respondent declines as the child gets older.
- In addition, the accuracy of the data may be reduced in cases where an adult other than the child's mother responded regarding the child; this occurred for around 27% of infants aged 0–3 years (21% non-remote, 33% remote).
- Issues relating to the benefits of breastfeeding have been widely promoted in the community and some respondents may have tended to report recommended practices rather than actual practices (ABS 2006b).
- In addition, respondents may not have interpreted the concept 'regularly' in relation to the solids question correctly, where they did not seek clarification from the interviewer. It should also be kept in mind that the inclusion both of infants who are still breastfeeding at the time of the survey and of infants who have ceased breastfeeding may produce estimates that are lower than expected.

## **National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey**

The NATSISS is conducted in all states and territories and includes remote and non-remote areas. The 2008 sample was 13,300 persons in 6900 households, with a response rate of 82% of households. Up to three randomly selected Indigenous people were chosen from selected households to participate in the survey. Trained ABS interviewers conducted the survey using face-to-face interviews. In non-remote areas interviewers used a notebook computer to record responses, while in remote areas a paper questionnaire was used. Interviewers obtained the consent of a parent or guardian before interviewing those aged 15 to 17 years. Indigenous persons usually resident in non-private dwellings such as hotels, motels, hostels, hospitals, short-stay caravan parks, prisons and other correctional facilities were excluded.

The NATSISS uses the standard Indigenous status question. The NATSISS sample was specifically designed to select a representative sample of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians.

Information recorded in this survey is 'as reported' by respondents, and therefore may differ from information available from other sources or collected using different methodologies.

Data on health related indicators have been age-standardised to the 2001 total Australian population to account for differences in the age structures of the states and territories and the Indigenous and non-Indigenous population.

Time series comparisons for the 2008 survey are available through the 1994 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey and the 2002 NATSISS. However not all data elements align across the three (1994, 2001 and 2008) NATSISS surveys, hence care is required when reviewing results across the three surveys. There are no strictly comparable non-Indigenous results available for the 2008 NATSISS because the latest General Social Survey (which has been used in the past to compare with Indigenous results from the NATSISS) was run in 2006, with the next being run in 2010. Data from other ABS surveys run in 2008 may, however, be used to obtain rough non-Indigenous comparisons for some data items. Where possible, the ABS has provided recommendations for non-Indigenous data comparisons these have been adopted in this report.

The 2008 NATSISS has a relatively large level of under-coverage when compared to other ABS surveys. There was also an increase in under-coverage compared to previous ABS Indigenous surveys. For example, the estimated under-coverage in the 2004-05 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey (NATSIHS) was 42%. The overall under-coverage rate for the 2008 NATSISS is approximately 53% of the in-scope population at the national level. This rate varies across the states and territories (ABS 2010).

Further information on NATSISS data quality issues can be found in the 2008 NATSISS User's guide (ABS 2010).

## List of symbols used in tables

- n.a. not available
- rounded to zero (including null cells)
- 0 zero
- .. not applicable
- n.e.c. not elsewhere classified
- n.f.d. not further defined
- n.p. not available for publication but included in totals where applicable, unless otherwise indicated

## References

ABS (Australian Bureau of Statistics) 2006a. National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey 2004–05. ABS cat.no. 4715.0. Canberra: ABS.

ABS 2006b. National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey 2004–05: user's guide. ABS cat.no. 4715.0.55.004. Canberra: ABS.

ABS 2010. National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey: Users' Guide. ABS cat. no. 4720.0. Canberra: ABS.

Webb K, Marks G, Lund-Adams M, Rutishauser IHE & Abraham B 2001. Towards a national system for monitoring breastfeeding in Australia. Canberra: Australian Food and Nutrition Monitoring Unit.

## List of tables

Table 2.24.1:	Breastfeeding status, by state/territory, Indigenous persons, infants aged 0–3 years, 2008.....	1475
Table 2.24.2:	Breastfeeding status, by state/territory and Indigenous status, infants aged 0–3 years in non-remote areas, 2004–05.....	1477
Table 2.24.3:	Breastfeeding status, by remoteness and age of infant, Indigenous persons aged 0–3 years, 2008.....	1480
Table 2.24.4:	Breastfeeding status when first taken home from hospital, by state/territory, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander infants aged 0–3 years who were breastfed, non-remote areas, 2004–2005.....	1482
Table 2.24.5:	Whether infant ever given solid food, Indigenous infants aged less than 6 months, 2008.....	1483
Table 2.24.6:	Age at which first given solid food regularly, by Indigenous status, persons aged 0–3 years in non-remote areas, 2004–05.....	1484
Table 2.24.7:	Age at which first given solid food regularly, Indigenous children aged 0–3 years, 2008.....	1484
Table 2.24.8:	Age at which first given solid food regularly, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander infants aged 0–3 years and remoteness, 2008.....	1485

Table 2.24.9:	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander infants aged 0–3 years, by main reason stopped breastfeeding, non-remote areas, 2004–05 .....	1485
Table 2.24.10a:	Selected household characteristics by breastfeeding status, Indigenous infants aged 0–3 years, 2008.....	1487
Table 2.24.10b:	Breastfeeding status by selected household characteristics, Indigenous infants aged 0–3 years, 2008.....	1488

## List of figures

Figure 2.24.1:	Breastfeeding status, by state/territory, Indigenous persons, infants aged 0–3 years, 2008.....	1476
Figure 2.24.2:	Whether child was ever breastfed, by remoteness, Indigenous children aged 0–3 years, 2008.....	1481