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An article to be published in July's *Pediatrics* shares findings that while more than 85% of new mothers intend to breastfeed for at least three months, fewer than one third achieve that modest goal. Sadly, 15% stop breastfeeding before even leaving the hospital and over 40% do not make it to the one-month mark.

The article was designed to determine which hospital practices lead to better breastfeeding outcomes. Exclusive breastfeeding and avoidance of pacifiers during the hospital stay, as well as beginning breastfeeding within the first hour after birth were found to have the greatest impact on breastfeeding duration. International Board Certified Lactation Consultants (IBCLCs) play essential roles in providing prenatal education for new mothers and their support networks, advocating for “best practices” related to infant feeding in hospitals, teaching nurse and physician colleagues the skills needed to confidently assist their breastfeeding patients, and providing critical support after discharge.

IBCLCs are infant feeding experts. Several articles previously published in peer reviewed journals have found an association between giving birth in a hospital that employs IBCLCs and breastfeeding at hospital discharge. The same positive association between having IBCLCs available and breastfeeding outcomes was found in Neonatal Intensive Care Units, enabling a particularly vulnerable population of fragile newborns to benefit from human milk.

Increasing breastfeeding success is currently a major public health initiative. Breastfeeding is one of the few strategies known to reduce the risk of obesity---a national crisis---as well as provide protection from many acute illnesses and chronic conditions. Families need access to the specialized skills and knowledge of IBCLCs to meet their personal goals, which will improve the health of the nation. For more information, contact the United States Lactation Consultant Association at www.uslca.org.