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## Helping Mothers Power Through Early Breastfeeding Challenges

According to author Thomas Fuller, “All things are difficult before they are easy,” and breastfeeding is no exception. A study published in *Pediatrics* earlier this month assessed breastfeeding support, intentions and concerns of mothers, before and after birth, and compared the findings to breastfeeding outcomes. The results reveal a need for increased support to keep breastfeeding moms going through tough times.

Previous studies found that only about a third of mothers meet their breastfeeding goals. This new research found that when mothers had breastfeeding concerns on day three or seven after birth they were much more likely to wean before originally intended. Mothers who had planned to exclusively breastfeed but had difficulties on day three were significantly more likely to give formula and to wean altogether by two months than those who had no concerns at that time.

This shows that difficulties and concerns arising after hospital discharge have more impact than concerns arising during the hospital stay. One strategy to solve this problem is to have appropriate support available for mothers after discharge, when concerns are more likely to reduce breastfeeding duration.

If mothers have the support they need after discharge, they are more likely to power through the rough times at the beginning to meet their breastfeeding goals. And when professional assistance is needed, access to an International Board Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC) after discharge can be invaluable. Mothers who have access to an IBCLC may breastfeed longer, save healthcare dollars, and enjoy better health outcomes. For more information or to find an IBCLC in your area, visit [www.USLCA.org](http://www.USLCA.org).

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