

# Pediatricians' Practices on Early Nutrition, Feeding, and Growth: Results from a National Survey of Pediatricians, 2017

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## BACKGROUND

American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommendations related to growth & nutrition for children aged 0-2 years include:

- Use of World Health Organization (WHO) growth charts for plotting weight-for-length
- Exclusive breastfeeding for 6 months & continued breastfeeding for ≥12 months
- Solid food introduction around 6 months
- Providing guidance to parents on nutrition-related topics

## OBJECTIVE

Assess pediatrician practices related to nutrition, feeding, & growth for children aged 0-2 years

## DATA AND METHODS

### Data

- Nationally representative survey in 2017 of non-retired, U.S.-based pediatricians from American Academy of Pediatrics' Periodic Survey
- Randomly selected sample drawn from AAP's member database (Response rate = 50%)
- Analytic sample restricted to pediatricians who provide health supervision (n=704)

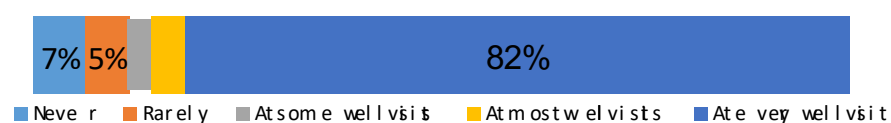
### Analysis

- Descriptive statistics were used to examine pediatricians' use of WHO growth charts, recommendations for breastfeeding & solid food introduction, and discussion of healthy behaviors
- McNemar tests compared responses for introduction of different solid foods at <6 months
- Chi-square tests examined differences in responses by practice setting:
  - Solo or 2-physician practice (n=95)
  - Group practice (n=364)
  - Hospital or clinic setting (n=208)

## RESULTS

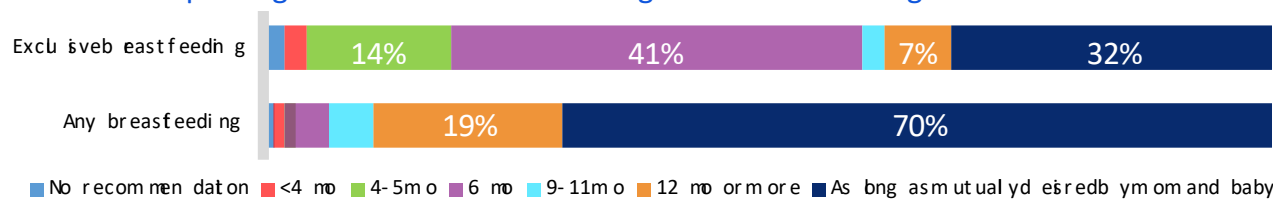
### Growth charts

Percent reporting use of WHO age- & sex-appropriate growth chart for children <2 years



### Breastfeeding

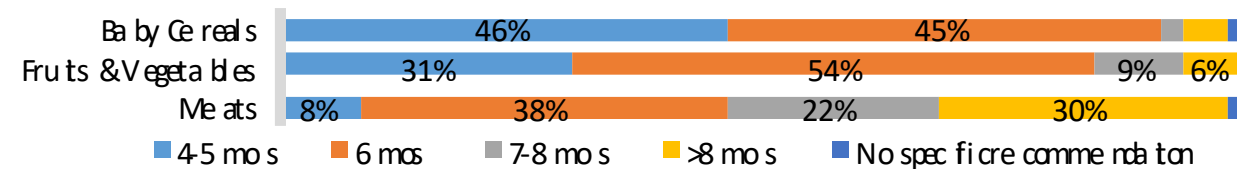
Percent reporting usual recommended length of breastfeeding



## RESULTS

### Solid food introduction

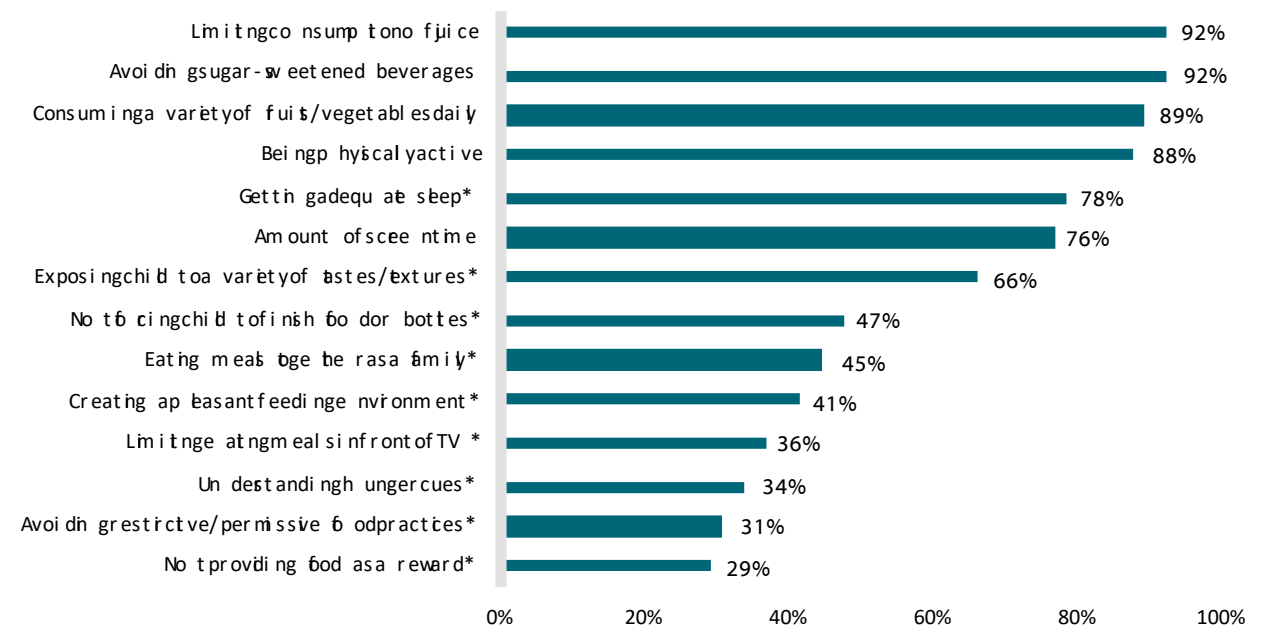
Percent reporting recommended timing of solid food introduction\*



\*Among those advising solid food introduction <6 months, baby cereals are recommended more often than fruits/vegetables or meats (p<0.01)

### Healthy behaviors

Percent discussing healthy behaviors at most or all well-child visits



\*Pediatricians in hospital/clinic settings report less frequent discussion of topic compared to group or solo/2-physician settings (p<0.01)

## SUMMARY & CONCLUSIONS

- Most pediatricians use WHO growth charts at well visits for children 0-2 years
- Most pediatricians discuss a variety of healthy behaviors with parents
  - Relatively few discuss responsive feeding behaviors
  - Discussion of healthy behaviors differs by practice setting
- Provision of recommended guidance on breastfeeding and solid food introduction timing is more mixed
- Continued efforts to support pediatricians' work related to early nutrition, feeding, and growth are needed

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