Weaning occurs earlier for infants with in-hospital formula feeding

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(HealthDay)—The hazard of weaning is increased for infants exposed to in-hospital formula feeding (IHFF), according to a study published online June 9 in *Pediatrics*.

Marcia Burton McCoy, M.P.H., from the Minnesota Department of Health in St. Paul, and Pamela Heggie, M.D., from the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis, matched breastfed infants given formula with infants exclusively breastfed (5,310 infants) using propensity scoring methods to examine the association between IHFF and duration of breastfeeding. A second analysis included 4,836 infants and was adjusted for medical indications for supplementation.

The researchers found that across time, the hazard ratios for weaning increased. The hazard ratio across the first year was 6.1 in the first analysis, with hazard ratios increasing with age (hazard ratios, 4.1, 8.2, and 14.6 in the first month, 1 to 6 months, and >6 months, respectively). Infants exposed to IHFF had an increased hazard of weaning compared with those who were exclusively breastfed in the second, more conservative analysis (hazard ratio, 2.5).

"Addressing the societal, structural, and procedural factors that contribute to IHFF has the potential to improve breastfeeding duration and thus the lifelong health of both mothers and infants," the authors write. "Team-based care, including lactation specialists integrated into routine patient care, helps to reduce IHFF and supports the infant feeding goals of mothers and families, leading to increased breastfeeding duration."

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