

# Longer breastfeeding duration boosts risk of iron deficiency

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Jonathon L. Maguire, M.D., from St. Michael's Hospital in Toronto, Ontario, Canada, and colleagues conducted a cross-sectional study involving 1,647 healthy children, aged 1 to 6 years (median age, 36 months) to examine the correlation between total breastfeeding duration and serum ferritin, iron deficiency, and iron deficiency anemia.

The researchers identified a significant correlation between increasing duration of breastfeeding and lower [serum ferritin](#). For each additional month of breastfeeding, there was a 4.8 percent increase in the odds of iron deficiency. The cumulative probability of iron deficiency increased with longer total breastfeeding duration, with an adjusted odds ratio of 1.71 for children breastfed over versus under age 12 months. There was an association, which did not reach [statistical significance](#), between total breastfeeding duration and iron

deficiency anemia.

"Our findings highlight a clinically important association warranting additional investigation, which may inform future guideline updates regarding assessment of risk for [iron deficiency](#) in young infants," the authors write.

One author disclosed financial ties to [pharmaceutical companies](#) that produce supplemental iron products.

**More information:** [Abstract](#)  
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