

# Increasing access to breastfeeding services for incarcerated women

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Of the more than 200,000 women in U.S. federal and state prisons and jails, it is estimated that up to 10% are pregnant and will give birth while incarcerated. Clinical practice guidelines to support breastfeeding and

increase infants' access to human milk are well established. However, little data assess the extent to which they are modifiable or applicable for incarcerated mothers.

A new article from the University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing (Penn Nursing) provides evidence-based recommendations to increase access to breastfeeding and lactation services for incarcerated [women](#). The recommendations, "Breastfeeding While Incarcerated: Evidence-Based Recommendations for Integrating Policy and Practice," are available online now and are set for upcoming publication in the *Journal of Correctional Health Care*.

"Incarceration should not be a barrier to breastfeeding or maintaining a milk supply," says Diane Spatz, Ph.D., RN-BC, FAAN, Professor of Perinatal Nursing and Helen M. Shearer Term Professor of Nutrition at Penn Nursing. "Applying current policy, increasing access to lactation programs, and adapting and integrating evidence-based models of care such as the Spatz 10-step model will provide incarcerated women and their infants tangible and outcome-oriented methods to increase breastfeeding rates and access to human milk."

Because of low implementation of breastfeeding support in the hospital and structural barriers in [correctional facilities](#), incarcerated women and their infants are at high-risk for not breastfeeding and should be considered a vulnerable population, the article states. The authors call for strategic updates to research and policy and offer recommendations in collaboration with existing programs to increase access to breastfeeding and lactation services for incarcerated women.

**More information:** Liliana Schmitt et al, Breastfeeding While Incarcerated: Evidence-Based Recommendations for Integrating Policy and Practice, *Journal of Correctional Health Care* (2022). [DOI: 10.1089/jchc.19.12.0094](https://doi.org/10.1089/jchc.19.12.0094)

Provided by University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing

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