

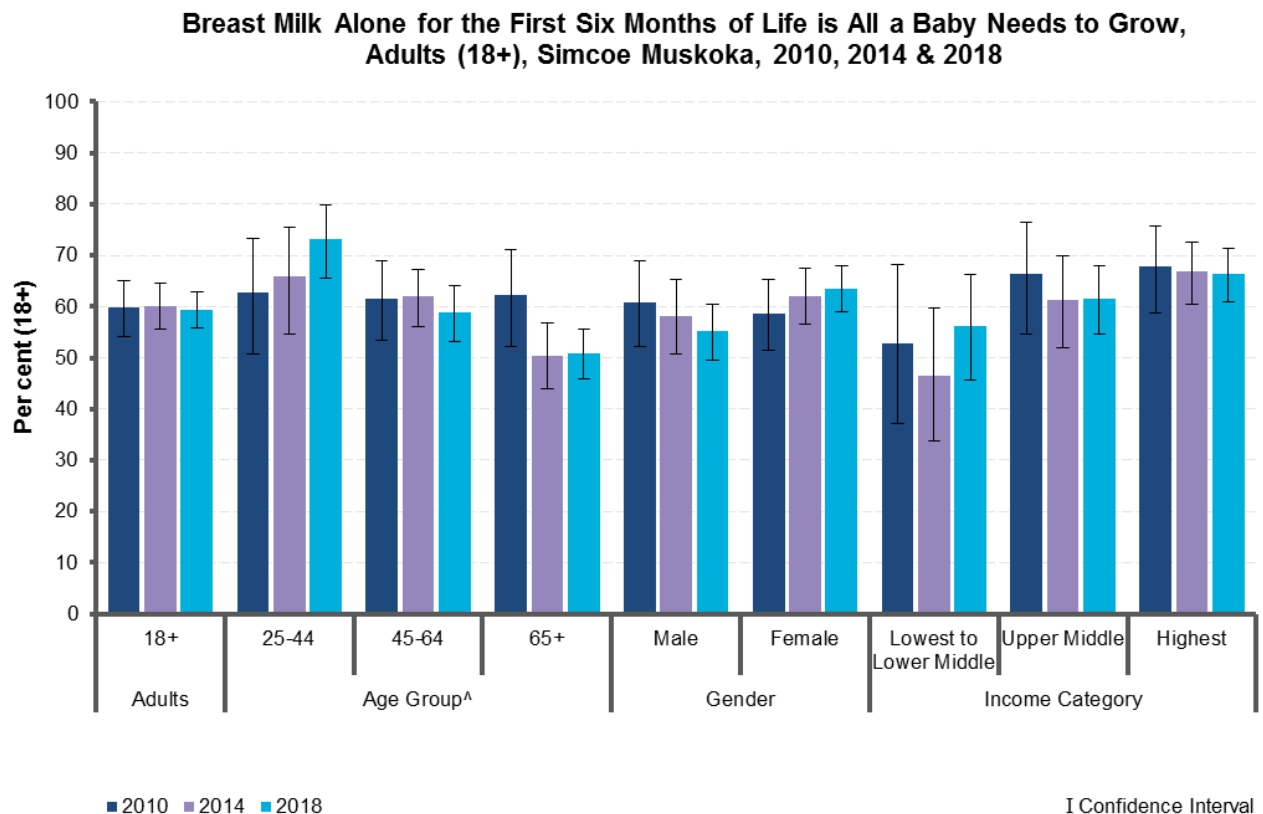
## Awareness of the Benefits of Breastfeeding

In 2018, as part of the Rapid Risk Factor Surveillance System (RRFSS), approximately 1,200 randomly sampled residents of Simcoe Muskoka were asked questions about their awareness of the benefits of breastfeeding. This is a brief summary of the results of those survey questions. These questions were previously asked as part of the 2010 and 2014 RRFSS surveys.

### **Breast Milk Alone is Sufficient for Growth**

In 2018, 59% (55.8%, 62.8%) of Simcoe Muskoka adults agreed with the statement 'a baby who is fed *only* breast milk for the first six months of life gets all the food they need to grow'. Perceived sufficiency of exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of life was lowest among seniors (65+) and those with lower levels of household income. There were no significant changes in perceived sufficiency of exclusive breastfeeding for six months in 2018 when compared with the data collected in 2014, and 2010 (see [figure 1](#)).

Figure 1: Per cent of adults (18+) that think breast milk only for the first six-months of life is all a baby needs to grow, Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit, 2010, 2014 & 2018.



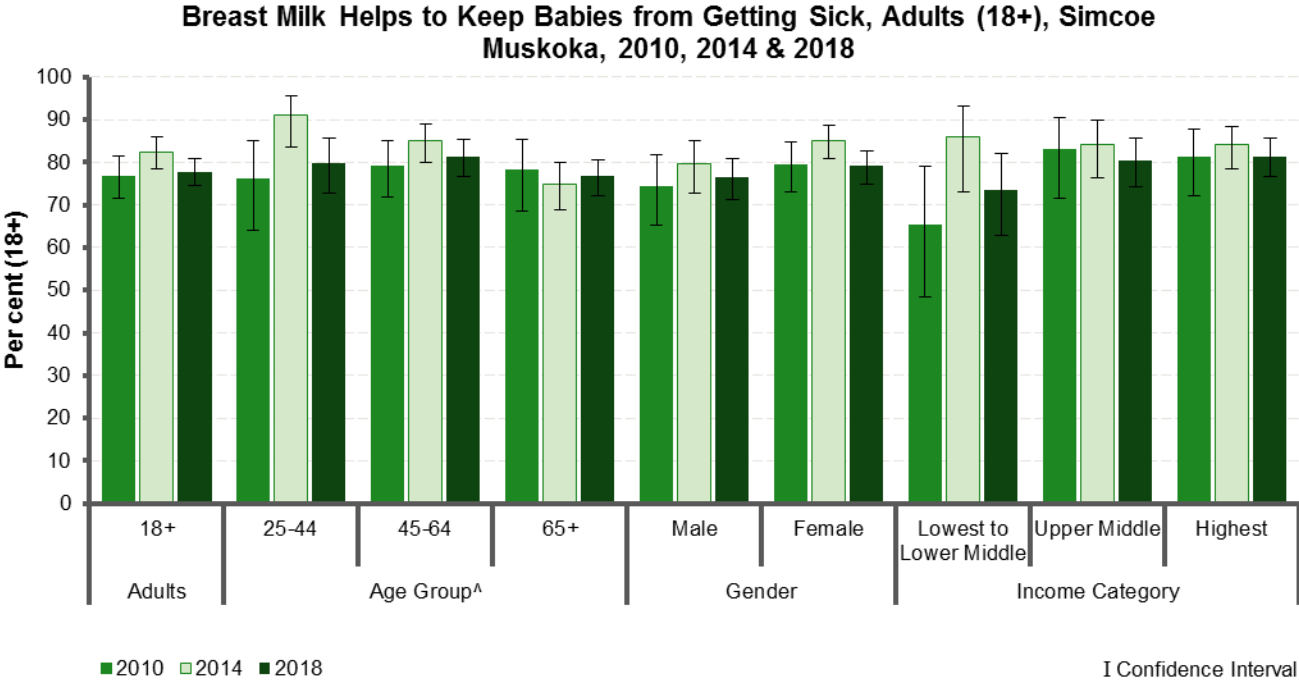
Data Sources: Rapid Risk Factor Surveillance System (RRFSS), Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit, Cycles: 1-3; 16-18; 28-30. Data collected on behalf of the health unit by the Institute for Social Research at York University, Toronto, Ontario, Canada. Post-stratification weights applied based on Population Estimates from Statistics Canada for the given calendar year of data collection.

<sup>A</sup>NB: data for the 18-24 age group was not shown due to unreliable estimates from small sample size

### Breastfeeding Helps Prevent Illness

These same respondents were also asked if they thought breast milk helps to keep a baby from getting sick. Significantly more respondents felt that breast milk helps to prevent illness in babies when compared with those that think that exclusive breastfeeding for the first six-months is sufficient for growth. In 2018, 78% (74.5%, 80.7%) of Simcoe Muskoka adults said that breast milk helps to keep babies from getting sick. There were no significant differences between groups in the perception that breastfeeding helps to prevent illness in babies. There were no significant changes in those who said breast milk helps to keep babies from getting sick in 2018 when compared with the data collected in 2014 and 2010. (see [figure 2](#)).

Figure 2: Per cent of adults (18+) that think breast milk helps to keep babies from getting sick, Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit, 2010, 2014, & 2018.

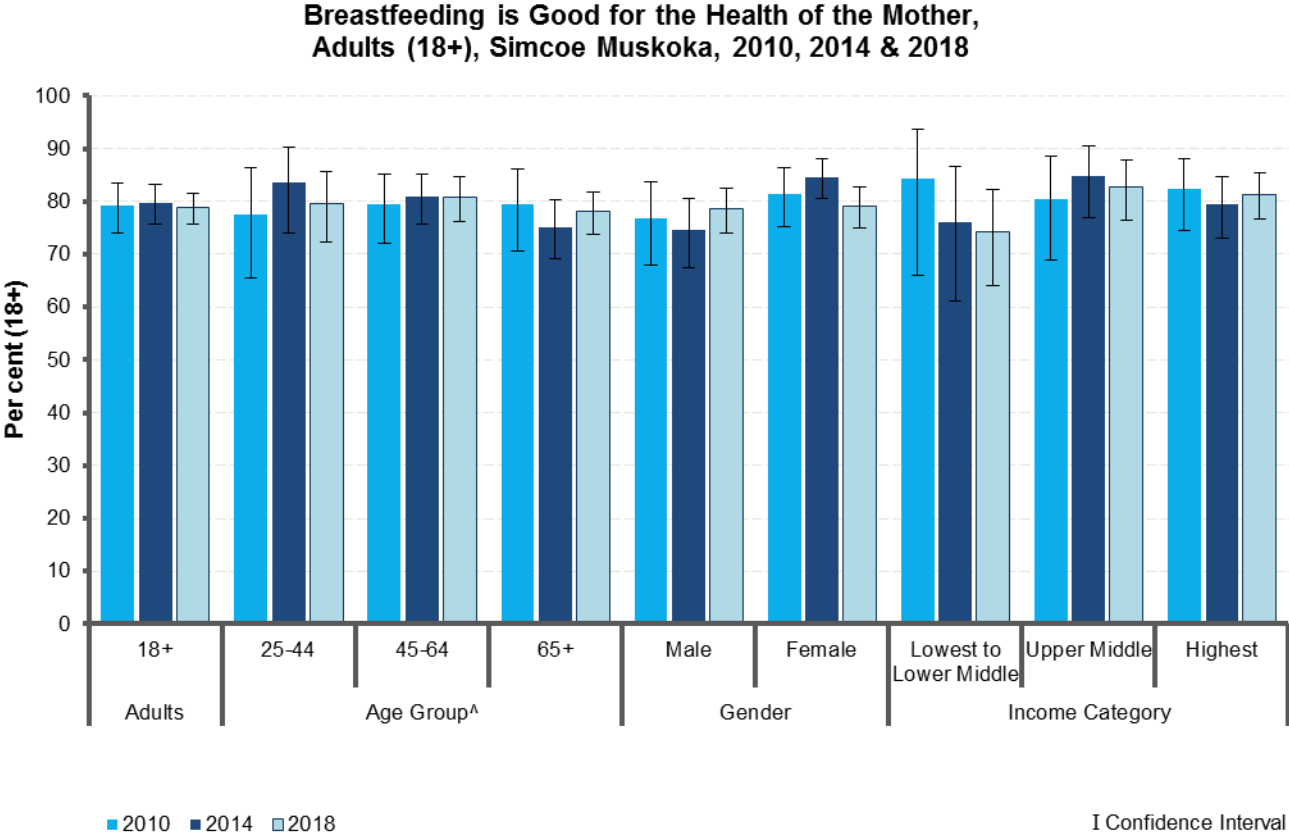


Data Sources: Rapid Risk Factor Surveillance System (RRFSS), Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit, Cycles: 1-3; 16-18; 28-30. Data collected on behalf of the health unit by the Institute for Social Research at York University, Toronto, Ontario, Canada  
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### Breastfeeding is Good for Mothers

Finally, respondents were asked if they thought breastfeeding was good for the health of the mother. Awareness of the benefits of breastfeeding for the mother was similar to what was reported for the prevention of illness in infants. In 2018, 79% (75.8%, 81.6%) of Simcoe Muskoka adults said that it was good for the mother’s health in she breastfeeds her baby. There were no significant differences across different groups and the results for 2018 were similar to what was observed in 2010 and 2014 (see [figure 3](#)).

Figure3: Per cent of adults (18+) that think breastfeeding is good for the health of the mother, Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit, 2010, 2014 & 2018.



Data Sources: Rapid Risk Factor Surveillance System (RRFSS), Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit, Cycles: 1-3; 16-18; 28-30. Data collected on behalf of the health unit by the Institute for Social Research at York University, Toronto, Ontario, Canada. Post-stratification weights applied based on Population Estimates from Statistics Canada for the given calendar year of data collection. ^NB: data for the 18-24 age group was not shown due to unreliable estimates from small sample size.