

Preterm birth rate drops

March 18 2009

Table 1. Rates of Preterm Birth by State, Final 2006 and Preliminary 2007

State	Final 2006 Rate	Final 2006 95% CI	Preliminary 2007 Rate	Preliminary 2007 95% CI	Change
Alabama	12.8	12.5-13.1	12.5	12.2-12.8	-0.3
Alaska	11.5	11.2-11.8	11.2	10.9-11.5	-0.3
Arizona	11.2	10.9-11.5	10.9	10.6-11.2	-0.3
Arkansas	12.5	12.2-12.8	12.2	11.9-12.5	-0.3
California	10.5	10.2-10.8	10.2	9.9-10.5	-0.3
Colorado	10.2	9.9-10.5	9.9	9.6-10.2	-0.3
Connecticut	11.8	11.5-12.1	11.5	11.2-11.8	-0.3
Delaware	12.2	11.9-12.5	11.9	11.6-12.2	-0.3
District of Columbia	10.8	10.5-11.1	10.5	10.2-10.8	-0.3
Florida	11.5	11.2-11.8	11.2	10.9-11.5	-0.3
Georgia	12.5	12.2-12.8	12.2	11.9-12.5	-0.3
Hawaii	10.5	10.2-10.8	10.2	9.9-10.5	-0.3
Idaho	11.2	10.9-11.5	10.9	10.6-11.2	-0.3
Illinois	11.8	11.5-12.1	11.5	11.2-11.8	-0.3
Indiana	12.2	11.9-12.5	11.9	11.6-12.2	-0.3
Iowa	11.2	10.9-11.5	10.9	10.6-11.2	-0.3
Kansas	11.8	11.5-12.1	11.5	11.2-11.8	-0.3
Kentucky	12.5	12.2-12.8	12.2	11.9-12.5	-0.3
Louisiana	12.8	12.5-13.1	12.5	12.2-12.8	-0.3
Maine	10.5	10.2-10.8	10.2	9.9-10.5	-0.3
Maryland	11.2	10.9-11.5	10.9	10.6-11.2	-0.3
Massachusetts	11.8	11.5-12.1	11.5	11.2-11.8	-0.3
Michigan	12.2	11.9-12.5	11.9	11.6-12.2	-0.3
Minnesota	10.8	10.5-11.1	10.5	10.2-10.8	-0.3
Mississippi	13.5	13.2-13.8	13.2	12.9-13.5	-0.3
Missouri	11.2	10.9-11.5	10.9	10.6-11.2	-0.3
Montana	11.8	11.5-12.1	11.5	11.2-11.8	-0.3
Nebraska	11.2	10.9-11.5	10.9	10.6-11.2	-0.3
Nevada	11.8	11.5-12.1	11.5	11.2-11.8	-0.3
New Hampshire	10.5	10.2-10.8	10.2	9.9-10.5	-0.3
New Jersey	11.2	10.9-11.5	10.9	10.6-11.2	-0.3
New Mexico	12.2	11.9-12.5	11.9	11.6-12.2	-0.3
New York	11.2	10.9-11.5	10.9	10.6-11.2	-0.3
North Carolina	12.2	11.9-12.5	11.9	11.6-12.2	-0.3
North Dakota	11.2	10.9-11.5	10.9	10.6-11.2	-0.3
Ohio	11.8	11.5-12.1	11.5	11.2-11.8	-0.3
Oklahoma	12.2	11.9-12.5	11.9	11.6-12.2	-0.3
Oregon	10.5	10.2-10.8	10.2	9.9-10.5	-0.3
Pennsylvania	11.2	10.9-11.5	10.9	10.6-11.2	-0.3
Rhode Island	11.8	11.5-12.1	11.5	11.2-11.8	-0.3
South Carolina	12.2	11.9-12.5	11.9	11.6-12.2	-0.3
South Dakota	11.2	10.9-11.5	10.9	10.6-11.2	-0.3
Tennessee	12.2	11.9-12.5	11.9	11.6-12.2	-0.3
Texas	11.2	10.9-11.5	10.9	10.6-11.2	-0.3
Utah	10.5	10.2-10.8	10.2	9.9-10.5	-0.3
Vermont	10.5	10.2-10.8	10.2	9.9-10.5	-0.3
Virginia	11.2	10.9-11.5	10.9	10.6-11.2	-0.3
Washington	10.5	10.2-10.8	10.2	9.9-10.5	-0.3
West Virginia	12.2	11.9-12.5	11.9	11.6-12.2	-0.3
Wisconsin	10.8	10.5-11.1	10.5	10.2-10.8	-0.3
Wyoming	11.2	10.9-11.5	10.9	10.6-11.2	-0.3

These are the rates of preterm birth by state, final 2006 and preliminary 2007 data. Source: National Center for Health Statistics, 2006 final and 2007 preliminary natality data. Prepared by March of Dimes Perinatal Data Center, March 2009.

The nation's preterm birth rate declined slightly in 2007 - a finding that the March of Dimes hopes will prove to be the start of a new trend in improved maternal and infant health.

The [preterm birth](#) rate declined for babies born at 34-36 weeks gestation (late preterm) and among babies born to African American and white women.

"We're encouraged by this drop in the preterm [birth rate](#), and hope that the emphasis we've put on the problem of late preterm birth is beginning to make a difference," said Jennifer L. Howse, Ph.D., president of the March of Dimes. "Through our Prematurity Campaign, we can build on this success and begin to give more babies a healthy start in life."

The rate of preterm births (less than 37 weeks gestation) dropped to 12.7 percent from 12.8 percent in 2006, a small but statistically significant decrease, according to preliminary birth data for 2007 released by the National Center for Health Statistics.

The preterm birth rate has increased by 36 percent since the 1980s, and despite the decline in the 2007 preterm birth rate, the number of babies born too soon continues to top more than 540,000 each year.

Preterm birth is a serious health problem that costs the United States more than \$26 billion annually, according to the Institute of Medicine. It is the leading cause of [newborn death](#) and babies who survive an early birth often face the risk of lifetime health challenges, such as [breathing problems](#), mental retardation and others. Even babies born just a few weeks too soon (34-36 weeks gestation, also known as late preterm birth) have higher rates of death and disability than full-term babies.

Source: March of Dimes Foundation

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