

ACOG: More women opting for unsupervised home births

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(HealthDay)—Home births without a midwife or doctor present—which have been linked to increased risk of infant death and disease—have jumped 79 percent in the United States in recent years, researchers report. The findings are scheduled for presentation at the annual meeting of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, held from May 2 to 6 in San Francisco.

The actual number of unsupervised births is small, with 4,926 reported in 2007 and 8,822 reported in 2012, study author Amos Grunebaum, M.D., director of obstetrics at New York-Presbyterian Hospital, told *HealthDay*. But, "I would call that [increase] concerning," added Grunebaum, who is also a professor of clinical obstetrics and gynecology

at Weill Cornell Medical College in New York City. "Unattended home births are usually associated with adverse outcomes."

For the study, the researchers turned to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention database on birth certificates. They defined unsupervised home births as those not attended by a physician, midwife, or other doctor. From 2007 to 2012, 24,600,409 births occurred in the United States. Of those, 140,912 were home births. And about 30 percent of the home births were unsupervised. The increase in unsupervised [home births](#) was higher in women who had already had other children (82 percent), compared with women who were having their first child (65 percent).

Guidelines from the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) state that hospital and birthing center births are safer. Women who still choose to plan a home birth should be generally healthy, not carrying twins or other multiples, and meet other criteria, ACOG recommends, and should seek assistance from midwives or physicians.

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