

# Postpartum women face high burden of medical debt

May 19 2023, by Lori Solomon

---



Postpartum women experience higher levels of medical debt than other

women, according to a study published online May 18 in the *Journal of General Internal Medicine*.

Jordan Cahn, M.D., from the Cambridge Health Alliance in Massachusetts, and colleagues evaluated the association between childbirth and medical debt among postpartum U.S. women. The analysis included responses from 12,163 participants (aged 18 to 49 years) in the 2019 to 2020 National Health Interview Survey (645 women with a live birth in the past year).

The researchers found that 19.8 percent of postpartum women faced difficulty with [medical bills](#) versus 15.1 percent of women without a live birth. In a multivariable regression analysis, postpartum women had higher odds of medical debt problems (adjusted odds ratio, 1.48). Results were similar when examining inability to pay medical bills and when limiting the analysis to privately insured women. Significantly higher adjusted odds of medical debt problems were seen among postpartum women with lower incomes and those with asthma or gestational diabetes.

"Our data show that [health insurance coverage](#) is neither adequate nor equitable for pregnant and [postpartum women](#)," Cahn said in a statement. "For women who have [private insurance](#), we need to make sure it adequately covers the costs of childbirth and does not saddle women with medical debt at the start of their baby's life."

One author disclosed being past president of Physicians for a National Health Program.

**More information:** Jordan Cahn et al, The Association of Childbirth with Medical Debt in the USA, 2019–2020, *Journal of General Internal Medicine* (2023). [DOI: 10.1007/s11606-023-08214-3](https://doi.org/10.1007/s11606-023-08214-3)

Copyright © 2023 [HealthDay](#). All rights reserved.

Citation: Postpartum women face high burden of medical debt (2023, May 19) retrieved 13 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2023-05-postpartum-women-high-burden-medical.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.