

# Opioid exposure linked to increased odds of preterm birth

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Opioid exposure is associated with increased odds of spontaneous preterm birth, according to a study published online on Feb. 14 in *JAMA Network Open*.

Olivia M. Bosworth, from Vanderbilt University in Nashville,

Tennessee, and colleagues conducted a case-control study examining a retrospective cohort of pregnant patients to examine whether prescription opioid use during [pregnancy](#) is associated with spontaneous preterm birth. Cases of spontaneous preterm birth were matched with up to 10 controls based on pregnancy start date, race, ethnicity, age at delivery, and history of prior preterm birth. The analyses included 25,391 cases and 225,696 controls.

The researchers found that 7.4 percent of the patients filled an [opioid prescription](#) in the 60 days prior to the index date. Compared with no opioid exposure, each doubling of nonzero opioid morphine milligram equivalents (MME) was associated with a 4 percent increase in the odds of spontaneous preterm birth (adjusted odds ratio, 1.04).

"We found a continuous positive association between total prescription opioid MME dose exposure and the odds of spontaneous preterm birth," the authors write. "Our findings support guidance to prescribe the lowest dose necessary to manage pain."

One author disclosed ties to the [pharmaceutical industry](#).

**More information:** Olivia M. Bosworth et al, Prescription Opioid Exposure During Pregnancy and Risk of Spontaneous Preterm Delivery, *JAMA Network Open* (2024). [DOI: 10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2023.55990](#)

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