

Preterm birth rate drops

18 March 2009

State	Final 2006		Preliminary 2007	
	Rate	% Change	Rate	% Change
United States	12.8	-0.1	12.7	-0.1
Alabama	12.1	-0.2	12.0	-0.1
Alaska	11.1	-0.1	11.0	-0.1
Arizona	11.1	-0.1	11.0	-0.1
Arkansas	12.1	-0.1	12.0	-0.1
California	11.1	-0.1	11.0	-0.1
Colorado	11.1	-0.1	11.0	-0.1
Connecticut	11.1	-0.1	11.0	-0.1
Delaware	11.1	-0.1	11.0	-0.1
District of Columbia	11.1	-0.1	11.0	-0.1
Florida	11.1	-0.1	11.0	-0.1
Georgia	11.1	-0.1	11.0	-0.1
Hawaii	11.1	-0.1	11.0	-0.1
Idaho	11.1	-0.1	11.0	-0.1
Illinois	11.1	-0.1	11.0	-0.1
Indiana	11.1	-0.1	11.0	-0.1
Iowa	11.1	-0.1	11.0	-0.1
Kansas	11.1	-0.1	11.0	-0.1
Kentucky	11.1	-0.1	11.0	-0.1
Louisiana	11.1	-0.1	11.0	-0.1
Maine	11.1	-0.1	11.0	-0.1
Maryland	11.1	-0.1	11.0	-0.1
Massachusetts	11.1	-0.1	11.0	-0.1
Michigan	11.1	-0.1	11.0	-0.1
Minnesota	11.1	-0.1	11.0	-0.1
Mississippi	11.1	-0.1	11.0	-0.1
Missouri	11.1	-0.1	11.0	-0.1
Montana	11.1	-0.1	11.0	-0.1
Nebraska	11.1	-0.1	11.0	-0.1
Nevada	11.1	-0.1	11.0	-0.1
New Hampshire	11.1	-0.1	11.0	-0.1
New Jersey	11.1	-0.1	11.0	-0.1
New Mexico	11.1	-0.1	11.0	-0.1
New York	11.1	-0.1	11.0	-0.1
North Carolina	11.1	-0.1	11.0	-0.1
North Dakota	11.1	-0.1	11.0	-0.1
Ohio	11.1	-0.1	11.0	-0.1
Oklahoma	11.1	-0.1	11.0	-0.1
Oregon	11.1	-0.1	11.0	-0.1
Pennsylvania	11.1	-0.1	11.0	-0.1
Rhode Island	11.1	-0.1	11.0	-0.1
South Carolina	11.1	-0.1	11.0	-0.1
South Dakota	11.1	-0.1	11.0	-0.1
Tennessee	11.1	-0.1	11.0	-0.1
Texas	11.1	-0.1	11.0	-0.1
Utah	11.1	-0.1	11.0	-0.1
Vermont	11.1	-0.1	11.0	-0.1
Virginia	11.1	-0.1	11.0	-0.1
Washington	11.1	-0.1	11.0	-0.1
West Virginia	11.1	-0.1	11.0	-0.1
Wisconsin	11.1	-0.1	11.0	-0.1
Wyoming	11.1	-0.1	11.0	-0.1

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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