



About Teen Pregnancy

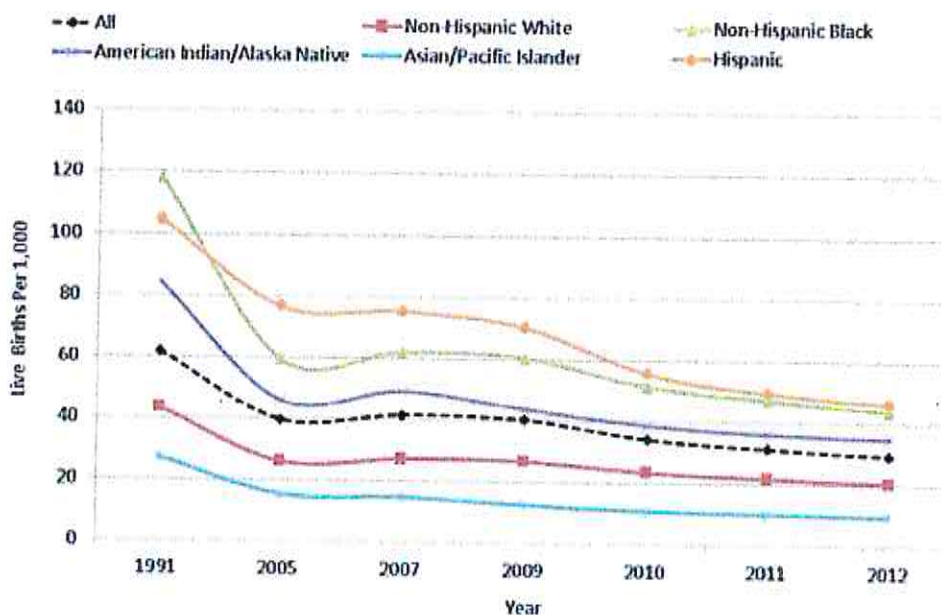
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Teen Pregnancy in the United States

In 2012, a total of 305,388 babies were born to women aged 15–19 years, for a live birth rate of 29.4 per 1,000 women in this age group.¹ This is a record low for U.S. teens in this age group, and a drop of 6% from 2011. Birth rates fell 8% for women aged 15–17 years, and 5% for women aged 18–19 years. While reasons for the declines are not clear, teens seem to be less sexually active, and more of those who are sexually active seem to be using birth control than in previous years.

Birth Rates (Live Births) per 1,000 Females Aged 15–19 Years, by Race and Hispanic Ethnicity, Select Years



Text version of this graph

Sources:

1991-2011 rates from: Martin JA, Hamilton BE, Ventura SJ, Osterman MJK, Curtin SC, Mathews TJ. Births: Final data for 2011. *Natl Vital Stat Rep.* 2013;62(1): Table A.

2012 rates from: Martin JA, Hamilton BE, Osterman MJK, Curtin SC, Mathews TJ. Births: Final data for 2012. *Natl Vital Stat Rep.* 2013;62(9): Table A.

Disparities in Teen Birth Rates

Teen birth rates declined for all races and for Hispanics except for 18–19 year old American Indian/Alaska Natives and Asian/Pacific Islanders, for whom rates did not change. Among 15–19 year olds, from 2011–2012 teen birth rates decreased 6% for non-Hispanic whites, 7% for non-Hispanic blacks, 3% for American Indian/Alaska Natives (AI/AN), 5% for Asian/Pacific Islanders, and 7% for



Hispanics.¹ Despite these declines, substantial disparities persist in teen birth rates, and teen pregnancy and childbearing continue to carry significant social and economic costs. In 2012, non-Hispanic black and Hispanic teen birth rates were still more than two times higher than the rate for non-Hispanic white teens, and American Indian/Alaska Native teen birth rates remained nearly twice as high as the white teen birth rate. The U.S. teen pregnancy, birth, sexually transmitted disease (STD), and abortion rates are substantially higher than those of other western industrialized nations.³

Non-Hispanic black youth, Hispanic/Latino youth, American Indian/Alaska Native youth, and socioeconomically disadvantaged youth of any race or ethnicity experience the highest rates of teen pregnancy and childbirth. Together, black and Hispanic teens comprised 57% of U.S. teen births in 2012; this proportion remained unchanged from 2011.¹ CDC is focusing on these priority populations because of the need for greater public health efforts to improve the life opportunities of adolescents facing significant health disparities, as well as to have the greatest impact on overall U.S. teen birth rates. Other priority populations for CDC's teen pregnancy prevention efforts include young people in foster care and the juvenile justice system, and those otherwise living in conditions of risk.

The Importance of Prevention

Teen pregnancy and childbearing bring substantial social and economic costs through immediate and long-term impacts on teen parents and their children.

- In 2011, teen pregnancy and childbirth accounted for at least \$9.4 billion in costs to U.S. taxpayers for increased health care and foster care, increased incarceration rates among children of teen parents, and lost tax revenue because of lower educational attainment and income among teen mothers.⁴
- Pregnancy and birth are significant contributors to high school drop out rates among girls. Only about 50% of teen mothers receive a high school diploma by 22 years of age, versus approximately 90% of women who had not given birth during adolescence.⁵
- The children of teenage mothers are more likely to have lower school achievement and drop out of high school, have more health problems, be incarcerated at some time during adolescence, give birth as a teenager, and face unemployment as a young adult.⁶

These effects remain for the teen mother and her child even after adjusting for those factors that increased the teenager's risk for pregnancy, such as growing up in poverty, having parents with low levels of education, growing up in a single-parent family, and having poor performance in school.³

CDC Priority: Reducing Teen Pregnancy and Promoting Health Equity Among Youth

Teen pregnancy prevention is one of CDC's top six priorities, a "winnable battle" in public health, and of paramount importance to health and quality of life for our youth. Evidence-based teen pregnancy prevention programs typically address specific protective factors on the basis of knowledge, skills, beliefs, or attitudes related to teen pregnancy.



1. Knowledge of sexual issues, HIV, other STDs, and pregnancy (including methods of prevention).
2. Perception of HIV risk.
3. Personal values about sex and abstinence.
4. Attitudes toward condoms (pro and con).
5. Perception of peer norms and sexual behavior.
6. Individual ability to refuse sex and to use condoms.
7. Intent to abstain from sex or limit number of partners.
8. Communication with parents or other adults about sex, condoms, and contraception.
9. Individual ability to avoid HIV/STD risk and risk behaviors.
10. Avoidance of places and situations that might lead to sex.
11. Intent to use a condom.

In addition to evidence-based prevention programs, teens need access to youth-friendly clinical services. Parents and other trusted adults also play an important role in helping teens make healthy choices about relationships, sex, and birth control. Learn about what CDC and other federal agencies are doing to reduce teen pregnancy.



Parent and Guardian Resources

Help your teen make healthy choices about sex.

Sexual development is a normal part of the teen years. Your teen needs your help in understanding his or her feelings, peer pressure, and how to say no if he or she does not want to have sex. If your teen starts having sex, he or she needs to know how to prevent pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases. Teens want to talk with their parents about sex and relationships.



Parents have a strong impact on whether a teenager makes healthy decisions for himself or herself. This goes for making healthy decisions about sex, as well. Research shows that teens who talk with their parents about sex, relationships, birth control and pregnancy—

- Begin to have sex at later age.
- Use condoms and birth control more often if they do have sex.
- Have better communication with romantic partners.
- Have sex less often.



Here are some resources—specifically for parents—where you can find information and tips to help you talk with your teen about sex, birth control, relationships, pregnancy, and other related topics.

[Office of Adolescent Health: Talking with Teens
\(http://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/resources-and-publications/info/parents\)](http://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/resources-and-publications/info/parents)

Research confirms what young people already know—what their parents have to say matters to teens. That's why parents play a powerful role in helping adolescents make healthy decisions

about sex, sexuality, and relationships. But if you think talking to your son or daughter about sex is tough, or it makes you nervous, know that you're not alone. Lots of other parents feel the same way.

CDC's Parent Portal

Information from across all of CDC for parents, covering everything from safety at home and in the community to immunization schedules and developmental milestones for ages 0–19 years.

Advocates for Youth (<http://advocatesforyouth.org/>)

A resource for parents with Frequently Asked Questions, information on the importance of parents as sex educators, and tips on talking with teens.

American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) Healthy Children: Teen Dating and Sex (<http://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/teen/dating-sex/Pages/default.aspx>)

Information designed especially for parents about information on all stages of child and adolescent development. This teen section provides information from pediatricians on talking with teens about numerous topics related to sex, sexuality, healthy relationships, and birth control.

National Campaign To Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy: Parent's Portal (<http://thenationalcampaign.org/featured-topics/parents>)

Tips and resources for talking with teen sons and daughters about sex and relationships, discussion guides, blogs and videos.



Planned Parenthood Tools for Parents

(<http://www.plannedparenthood.org/parents/index.htm>)

Tools and information for parents on positive communication with teens to help them make healthy decisions about sex.

Find a family planning clinic near you (<http://www.hhs.gov/opa>)

Family planning clinics across the country are available to provide women and men with reproductive health care. This clinic locator is provided by the Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Population Affairs (OPA). OPA serves as a focal point on a wide range of reproductive health care services and topics, including adolescent pregnancy, family planning, and other population issues.