

# Adequate Prenatal Care

## Definition

Adequate prenatal care is the number and percent of pregnant women who received early prenatal care (care in the first thirteen weeks of pregnancy) and regular prenatal care (10 or more prenatal care visits).

## Data in context

All children need a healthy start in life, and that begins with their mother's access to early and frequent prenatal care. Women who are able to receive early and regular prenatal care have healthier pregnancies and healthier babies.<sup>1</sup>

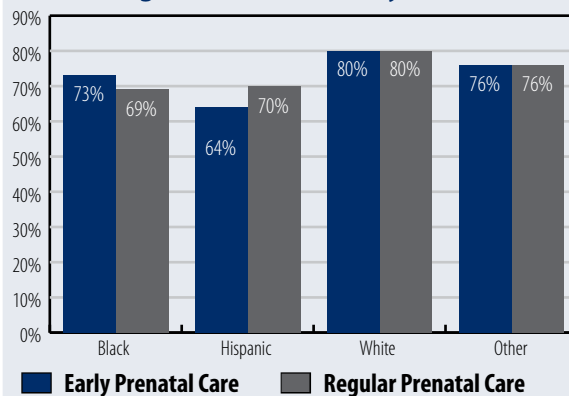
Early prenatal care promotes healthy births by detecting and treating pre-existing medical conditions, such as diabetes and anemia.<sup>2</sup> During prenatal care visits, health professionals identify and treat potential health problems before they become serious, and also monitor the progress of the pregnancy.<sup>3</sup> Babies of mothers who do not receive prenatal care are three times more likely to be born at a low birthweight and five times more likely to die than those born to mothers who do receive care.<sup>4</sup>

The public health field has pushed to ensure that preconception care is available for all women who could potentially become pregnant. By shifting to this model of care, the use of contraceptives, pregnancy planning, and steps to improve overall health are emphasized before the pregnancy happens.<sup>5</sup>

Nationally, the percent of women receiving prenatal care services early in their pregnancies stayed stagnant, after consistent improvements from 1990 to 2003. Data from comparable states indicate that in 2005, only 70.2 percent of women in the United States began using prenatal care during the first trimester of pregnancy and 7.7 percent of women received late or no prenatal care.<sup>6</sup>

The rate of women in Kentucky who receive adequate prenatal care decreased between the reported years from 68 percent to 66 percent. Rates dropped by 15 percentage points or more in Gallatin, Lewis, and Metcalfe Counties. Rates in 46 counties improved over time with the greatest improvements seen in Carlisle, Carroll, Robertson, and Trimble Counties. In 2006 the range of women who received adequate care varied greatly from fewer than half in Knott, Letcher, Owsley and Perry Counties to 86 percent in Ballard County.

Percent of Births to Mothers Receiving Early and Regular Prenatal Care by Race, 2006



Source: Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services, processed by Kentucky Population Research at the University of Louisville Urban Studies Institute.

Inequities in access to health care contribute to racial disparities in accessing early prenatal care. In Kentucky, White women were most likely (68 percent) and Hispanic women least likely (51 percent) to receive adequate prenatal care services.<sup>7</sup> Disparities also appear in access to adequate prenatal care among Kentucky births to foreign-born mothers, though Kentucky births to foreign-born mothers show strong birth outcomes.<sup>8</sup>

To access early and frequent prenatal care, pregnant women need adequate health care coverage and options for quality care in their community. Health care providers can increase the use of prenatal care by becoming Medicaid providers for low-income mothers, becoming culturally competent in their practices, offering patient-focused care, and promoting messages about preconception health.<sup>9</sup> Universal health coverage for pregnant women would increase their exposure to educational materials about their pregnancy, provide access to critical prenatal care, and ensure continuity of care and a medical home.<sup>10</sup>

Primary care physicians can also discuss ways to improve women's health prior to conception and provide risk assessments, health screenings, and medical interventions to prevent pregnancy complications.<sup>11</sup> By focusing on preconception care, opportunities for discussion to help women

prepare for healthy pregnancies could include genetics, overall health, environmental toxins, and lifestyle choices.<sup>12</sup>

**Data Source:** Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services, processed by Kentucky Population Research at the University of Louisville Urban Studies Institute.

**Data Note:** Data are reported by mother's place of residence, not infant's place of birth. Data from 2006 are preliminary and exclude births to Kentucky mothers that occurred in Ohio. For cases where the information for this variable was missing, the case was excluded from the total number of live births.

**Rate Calculation:** (number of women receiving prenatal care in the first 13 weeks of pregnancy and making 10 or more visits in 2004 \* 100) / (total number of live births in 2004)  
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- 1 March of Dimes. *During Your Pregnancy: Prenatal Care*. Available at [www.marchofdimes.com](http://www.marchofdimes.com). Accessed August 2008.
- 2 Child Trends. *Late or No Prenatal Care*. Available at <http://www.childtrendsdatabank.org>. Accessed August 2008.
- 3 March of Dimes. *During Your Pregnancy: Prenatal Care*. Available at [www.marchofdimes.com](http://www.marchofdimes.com). Accessed August 2008.
- 4 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office on Women's Health (2006). *Prenatal Care*. 4women.gov: The National Women's Health Information Center. Available at <http://www.4women.gov>. Accessed August 2008.
- 5 Trust for America's Health (2008). *Healthy Women, Healthy Babies*. Available at <http://www.healthymamericans.org>. Washington DC. Accessed August 2008.
- 6 Martin, J., Hamilton, B., Sutton, P., Ventura, S., Menacker, F., Kirmeyer, S., and Munson, M. (2007). "Births: Final Data for 2005." *National Vital Statistics Reports*, vol. 56, no. 6. Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics.
- 7 Data obtained from the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services, July 2008, processed by Kentucky Population Research at the University of Louisville Urban Studies Institute.
- 8 Bryan, J., and Grieshop-Goodwin, T. (2008). *Ensuring a Healthy Start: Prenatal Care and Birth Outcomes among Newborn Kentuckians*. Kentucky Youth Advocates Available at <http://www.kyouth.org>. Accessed August 2008.
- 9 Trust for America's Health (2008). *Healthy Women, Healthy Babies*. Available at <http://www.healthymamericans.org>. Accessed August 2008.
- 10 The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (2008). *Health Care for Women, Health Care for All: A Reform Agenda*. Available at: <http://www.acog.org>. Accessed August 2008.
- 11 Rosenberg, K., Spencer, S., Gelow, J., Sandoval, A., and Lapidus, J. (2005). *The Importance of Marketing Perinatal Health to Non-Contemplators: The Cases of Folic Acid and Alcohol*. Available at <http://www.marchofdimes.com>. Accessed August 2008.
- 12 Correa-de-Araujo, R. (2005). *Disparities in Preconception Health Care: An Overview*. Available at: <http://www.marchofdimes.com>. Accessed August 2008.

# Births to mothers receiving early and regular prenatal care (number & percent of all live births)

	2004		2006	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Kentucky	37,229	68	36,919	66
Adair	141	72	146	69
Allen	131	65	134	54
Anderson	158	66	208	76
Ballard	84	85	49	86
Barren	368	66	319	65
Bath	117	78	109	71
Bell	216	58	261	67
Boone	1,256	79	961	71
Bourbon	179	70	172	65
Boyd	339	59	351	57
Boyle	219	74	245	72
Bracken	98	76	71	65
Breathitt	107	64	122	57
Breckinridge	155	62	128	54
Bullitt	534	77	620	77
Butler	115	67	109	67
Caldwell	83	68	97	64
Calloway	239	76	304	85
Campbell	834	77	580	67
Carlisle	42	68	50	82
Carroll	95	58	96	70
Carter	204	61	214	59
Casey	116	59	108	60
Christian	733	58	739	56
Clark	339	77	350	75
Clay	142	54	167	57
Clinton	90	71	81	60
Crittenden	52	55	77	65
Cumberland	52	73	52	61
Daviess	851	64	831	61
Edmonson	87	71	82	70
Elliott	51	68	57	63
Estill	110	54	90	51
Fayette	2,717	71	2,743	71
Fleming	132	72	113	63
Floyd	302	54	329	58
Franklin	396	65	453	72
Fulton	59	66	48	54
Gallatin	101	70	75	55
Garrard	115	71	134	71

	2004		2006	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Grant	278	73	255	64
Graves	348	73	347	70
Grayson	236	70	221	68
Green	84	68	84	71
Greenup	257	60	205	59
Hancock	78	65	60	63
Hardin	831	56	896	56
Harlan	237	64	259	62
Harrison	156	70	170	75
Hart	154	63	112	50
Henderson	364	58	346	59
Henry	139	68	149	76
Hickman	36	73	34	74
Hopkins	394	66	333	55
Jackson	98	52	104	56
Jefferson	7,111	73	7,312	71
Jessamine	414	72	490	70
Johnson	176	62	210	66
Kenton	1,675	75	1,278	66
Knott	73	42	58	30
Knox	292	55	330	64
LaRue	84	56	93	53
Laurel	459	64	530	68
Lawrence	119	58	114	53
Lee	46	62	39	53
Leslie	67	46	61	51
Letcher	89	27	60	18
Lewis	137	76	49	58
Lincoln	229	65	238	68
Livingston	63	70	85	77
Logan	239	67	214	60
Lyon	36	68	51	73
McCracken	658	79	662	80
McCreary	184	72	174	76
McLean	69	57	71	58
Madison	641	64	683	64
Magoffin	85	48	112	58
Marion	163	65	187	73
Marshall	264	81	233	78
Martin	88	54	101	63
Mason	155	77	173	66

	2004		2006	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Meade	125	55	161	62
Menifee	54	73	52	80
Mercer	190	68	164	67
Metcalfe	94	74	70	57
Monroe	111	71	78	57
Montgomery	251	73	282	73
Morgan	104	65	107	69
Muhlenberg	253	67	243	62
Nelson	387	67	444	76
Nicholas	79	76	54	72
Ohio	212	62	213	60
Oldham	416	75	441	79
Owen	93	74	91	69
Owsley	23	37	24	45
Pendleton	132	72	96	64
Perry	167	41	157	40
Pike	473	62	444	57
Powell	129	69	140	74
Pulaski	577	77	547	73
Robertson	9	56	12	67
Rockcastle	137	61	108	58
Rowan	169	80	202	73
Russell	157	72	140	71
Scott	419	67	478	74
Shelby	322	60	393	65
Simpson	140	69	135	62
Spencer	151	75	144	74
Taylor	167	61	220	70
Todd	93	49	103	57
Trigg	100	69	99	69
Trimble	84	71	73	85
Union	87	54	124	59
Warren	950	71	899	61
Washington	105	74	107	74
Wayne	177	66	168	73
Webster	107	55	95	51
Whitley	263	67	288	62
Wolfe	78	67	81	67
Woodford	179	66	184	68