



JANUARY IS BIRTH DEFECTS

AWARENESS MONTH (BDAM)

#BirthDefectsAwarenessMonth

#EveryJourneyMatters

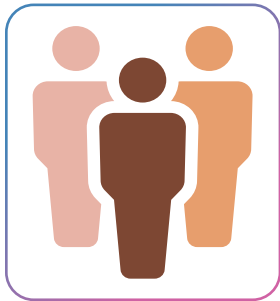


A birth defect is defined as a condition present at birth that affects the structure or function of the body. Most often, birth defects develop during the first three months of pregnancy.¹ Every 4.5 minutes a baby is born with a birth defect in the United States. That means nearly one in every 33 babies is affected by birth defects each year.² Help us to raise awareness for these conditions this January during #BirthDefectsAwarenessMonth. To learn more on why #EveryJourneyMatters — from pregnancy, infancy, childhood, adolescence, to adulthood — visit [Making a Difference Across the Lifespan - CDC](#) and [March of Dimes & CDC Aim to Reduce Birth Defects Cases, Save Lives](#).

Health Disparities and Birth Defects

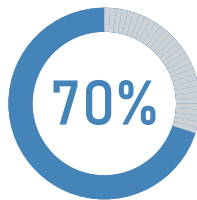
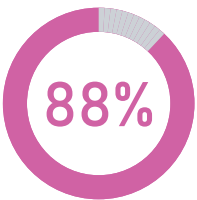
Health disparities are differences in health among groups of people. Health disparities are preventable, inequitable and related to the unequal distribution of social, political, economic and environmental resources.³

Birth defect rates across the U.S varied significantly among different racial and ethnic groups:⁴

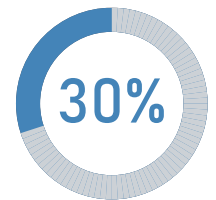
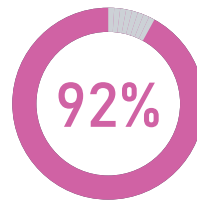


- Babies born to American Indian/Alaska Native individuals were significantly more likely to have cleft lip, with or without cleft palate, compared to those born to non-Hispanic White individuals.⁴
- Hispanic women had the highest rates of spina bifida in their children compared to non-Hispanic White and non-Hispanic Black women.⁴
- Infant mortality attributable to birth defects was 34% higher for babies of non-Hispanic Black mothers and 26% higher among infants born to Hispanic mothers compared to those born to non-Hispanic White mothers.^{4, 5}

In Kansas (2022), prenatal care disparities were evident:



Adequate or better prenatal care rates were highest among White non-Hispanic mothers (87.8%) and lowest among Black non-Hispanic mothers (69.9%).⁶



Insurance coverage played a key role: 91.7% of births covered by private insurance received adequate or better care. Meanwhile, those without health insurance (self-pay deliveries) received the highest rate of inadequate care (30%).⁶



Call to Action

For Clients



Dear Soon-to-be Moms: Start your parenting journey by taking steps to help you and your baby be as healthy as you can be. Not all birth defects can be prevented. However, there are steps you can take to help you and your baby be as healthy as you can be. #NBDAM #EveryJourneyMatters

- Get 400 micrograms (mcg) of [folic acid](#) every day, before and during pregnancy.
- Try to prevent infections.
- Get [recommended vaccines](#).
- Wash your hands.
- Avoid alcohol, tobacco and other substances.
- Practice [good health habits for birth defects prevention](#).
- Get tested for sexually transmitted infections.
- See health care professionals regularly, including early and regular prenatal care.
- Learn about your genes and family health history.
- Talk to a health care professionals before taking any medications.

Learn more about folic acid and the healthy behaviors you can adopt at [About Folic Acid | CDC](#), [Preventing Birth Defects | CDC](#), or [Planning for Pregnancy | Preconception Care | CDC](#).



For Providers

Health care providers play an important role in the care and support of a child with a birth defect and their family. Help educate patients on birth defects.

[Conversation Tips | Birth Defects | CDC](#)

Many children living with #BirthDefects require care from a variety of specialists. Coordination of care helps families work with their health care team to navigate care. [Birth Defects Program | KDHE](#) #EveryJourneyMatters



For Families

As young adults living with birth defects grow older, they begin taking on more responsibilities, like becoming more independent and taking care of their own health. Together, families can help individuals with #BirthDefects receive the care and services they need to be healthy, active and as independent as possible throughout the lifespan. [Special Health Care Needs Program | KDHE](#) #EveryJourneyMatters



For Communities

Achieving the best possible health will look different for everyone, but a community of support can help people no matter what health experiences they are navigating. Explore CDC's tips to connect with your local community during this #BirthDefects Awareness Month. [Medical Home \(aap.org\)](#), [HealthyChildren.org - From the American Academy of Pediatrics](#) and [The Arc | For People With Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities](#) #EveryJourneyMatters

Resources

Awareness Campaigns

- [Birth Defects Fact Sheets and Materials - CDC](#)
- [Birth Defects Program - KDHE](#)
- [Folic Acid Resources in Spanish](#)
- [#InMyFolicAcidEra Toolkit](#)
- [National Birth Defects Prevention Network](#)
- [National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities \(NCBDDD\)](#)

Birth Defects Awareness Month

- [Birth Defects Awareness Month - CDC](#)
- [January is National Birth Defects Awareness Month - March of Dimes](#)
- [National Birth Defects Prevention Network](#)

Providers and Educators

- [Folic Acid: Facts for Clinicians](#)
- [Folic Acid: The Best Tool to Prevent Neural Tube Defects Training](#)
- [March of Dimes - Birth Defects and Disparities Infographic](#)
- [March of Dimes - Birth Defects and Health Disparities](#)

Parents and Families

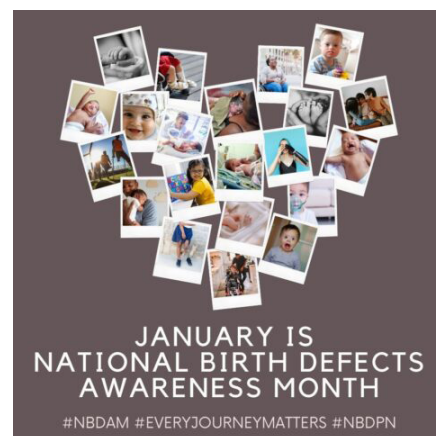
- [Early Intervention - CDC](#)
- [FAQs for Reducing Risks of Birth Defects - ACOG](#)
- [Information for Families Living with Birth Defects - CDC](#)
- [Kansas Early Childhood Developmental Services - KDHE](#)

National Social Media

- [Birth Defects Awareness Month Social Media](#)
- [National Birth Defects Prevention Network Social Media](#)

References

1. March of Dimes. (2023, December). Learn more about birth defects. marchofdimes.org/learn-more-about-birth-defects
2. Center for Disease Control. (2024, May 16). Birth defects awareness month. Birth Defects. cdc.gov/birth-defects/awareness-month/index.html
3. Center for Disease Control. (2008) Community Health and Program Services (CHAPS): Health Disparities Among Racial/Ethnic Populations. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. cdc.gov/healthyouth/disparities/index.htm
4. March of Dimes. (2021, June). Health disparities and birth defects. marchofdimes.org/find-support/topics/planning-baby/health-disparities-and-birth-defects#:~:text=Babies%20in%20certain%20racial%20groups,of%20non%2DHispanic%20white%20mothers
5. Almli, L. M., Ely, D. M., Ailes, E. C., Abouk, R., Grosse, S. D., Isenburg, J. L., Waldron, D. B., & Reefhuis, J. (2020, January 17). Infant Mortality Attributable to Birth Defects - United States, 2003-2017. Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, 69(2), 25-29. cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/pdfs/mm6902a1-H.pdf
6. Kansas Department of Health and Environment. (2022). Kansas Prenatal Care Report 2022. kdhe.ks.gov/DocumentCenter/View/42962/Kansas-Prenatal-Care-Report-2022-PDF



Social Media Posts

Click the images to download and use to spread awareness about Birth Defects Awareness Month on your social media. The images are high quality and are free to download for non-commercial use only.



1. **Preconception Health:** January is National Birth Defects Awareness Month!

Before pregnancy, it's important to take steps that can support a healthy pregnancy journey. Make healthy choices, get regular checkups, and talk to your healthcare provider about folic acid and other essential nutrients. #NationalBirthDefectsAwarenessMonth #PreconceptionHealth #HealthyPregnancy
womenshealth.gov/pregnancy/you-get-pregnant/preconception-health

Salud Antes de la Concepción: ¡Enero es el Mes Nacional de la Concienciación sobre los Defectos de Nacimiento!

Antes del embarazo, es importante tomar medidas que contribuyan a un embarazo saludable. Opte por hábitos saludables, acuda a sus revisiones médicas periódicas y hable con su médico sobre el ácido fólico y otros nutrientes esenciales. #NationalBirthDefectsAwarenessMonth #PreconceptionHealth #HealthyPregnancy
womenshealth.gov/pregnancy/you-get-pregnant/preconception-health

2. **Healthy Habits Matter:** Did you know that lifestyle choices like quitting smoking, avoiding alcohol and maintaining a healthy weight can reduce the risk of birth defects?

Start your health journey today—your baby's future depends on it. #HealthyMomHealthyBaby #NationalBirthDefectsAwarenessMonth #BirthDefectPrevention
cdc.gov/birth-defects/prevention/index.html

Los Hábitos Saludables Importan: ¿Sabía que las decisiones sobre el estilo de vida, como dejar de fumar, evitar el alcohol y mantener un peso saludable, pueden reducir el riesgo de los defectos de nacimiento? Empiece hoy mismo a cuidar su salud - el futuro de su bebé depende de ello. #HealthyMomHealthyBaby #NationalBirthDefectsAwarenessMonth #BirthDefectPrevention
cdc.gov/birth-defects/prevention/index.html

3. **Birth Defects Myths:** Birth defects can happen to anyone, and most of the time, we don't know why. Understanding risk factors and taking preventive steps can help. Let's break the myths and raise awareness! Together, we can work for healthier pregnancies and babies. #NationalBirthDefectsAwarenessMonth #PreventBirthDefects #AwarenessMatters cdc.gov/birth-defects/resources/index.html

Mitos Sobre los Defectos de Nacimiento: Los defectos de nacimiento le pueden ocurrir a quien sea y la mayoría de las veces, no sabemos, ¿Por qué? Entender los factores de riesgo y tomar medidas preventivas puede ayudar. Rompamos los mitos y aumentemos la concienciación. Unidos, podemos trabajar por embarazos y bebés más sanos. #NationalBirthDefectsAwarenessMonth #PreventBirthDefects #AwarenessMatters
cdc.gov/birth-defects/resources/index.html