



Community Health Profile

MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH

Ensuring the health of mothers, infants, and children is important for the health of the current generation and future generations. Access to quality care before, during and between pregnancies can reduce complications during pregnancy and ensure positive outcomes for the mother and infant. A positive, supportive environment for mother and infant following birth is also critical for the healthy growth and development of infants. This can set children on the path to reach their full potential.

KEY FACTS

The rate of teen pregnancy has decreased and the percent of births to unmarried mothers has remained stable over the past five years.

More mothers are starting prenatal care after the first trimester.

The majority of 9th and 11th graders who are sexually active report using birth control.

The number of deaths is low, and the rate of infant deaths (deaths under one year of age) has decreased.

The number of preschoolers in Early Childhood Special Education has increased over the past 10 years.

Births have decreased since the COVID-19 pandemic.

Pregnancies and births in Dakota County

- Dakota County had an estimated 84,917 women of childbearing age (15-44 years) in 2022.
- In 2022, there were 4,919 births to Dakota County residents.

Pre-conception risk factors can affect the outcome of a pregnancy

- 45.5 percent of Minnesota women of childbearing age did not take folic acid supplements daily (2016-2020).
- In 2022, two percent of Dakota County mothers smoked during pregnancy, similar to 2021.

Unintended pregnancy

- In 2020, 12 percent of pregnancies in Dakota County residents resulted in induced abortions, slightly above the state. The abortion rate per 1,000 females ages 15-44 decreased from 2016 to 2020, (from 9.0 to 8.2 per 1,000 births).
- 27.5 percent of live births to Dakota County residents in 2022 were to unmarried mothers – a percent that was stable from 2018 to 2022. (NOTE: Not all births to unmarried mothers are unintended).
- Two percent of live births to Dakota County mothers were to mothers younger than 20 years old (2022).
- Thirty-two percent of Minnesota mothers surveyed in 2021 said their pregnancy was unintended.

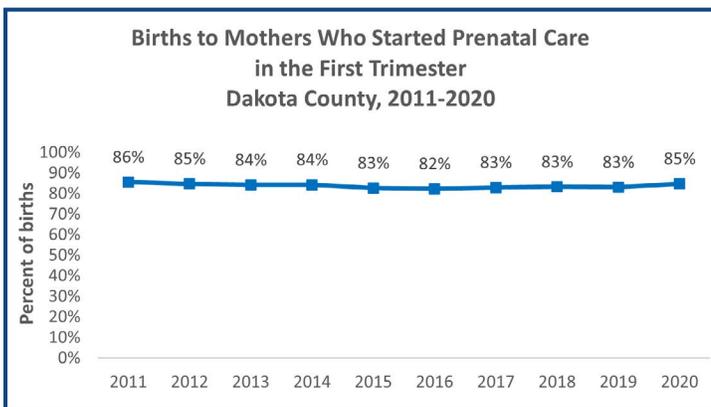
Infant mortality

- In 2021, 14 Dakota County infants under one year died.
- The infant death rate decreased from 2017 to 2021.



Early prenatal care is associated with improved birth outcomes

- Eighty-five percent of Dakota County mothers started prenatal care in the first trimester (2020), a rate that has slightly decreased since 2011.
- In 2020, four percent of live singleton births in Dakota County were low-birthweight, similar to the state. The percentage slightly decreased from 2016 to 2020.
- Seven percent of singleton births in 2020 in Dakota County were preterm, a percentage that is the same as the state overall and was stable since 2016.
- Twenty-eight percent of Minnesota women reported depression during pregnancy or the postpartum period (2021).



Source: Minnesota Department of Health, *County Health* tables

Birth defects

- An estimated 2,000 babies are born each year in Minnesota with a serious birth defect.
- Birth defects were one of the leading causes of death in infants under one year of age from 2017 to 2021 (71 percent of Dakota County infant deaths).
- Seventy percent of birth defects have unknown causes, and 10 percent are due to environmental causes – some preventable.

Teen births and parenting

- The rate of births for 15-19 year olds in Dakota County decreased by 38 percent from the period 2014-2016 to the period 2018-2020.
- The Dakota County rate for 15-19 year olds is below the state for the period 2018-2020.

Adolescent reproductive health

- In 2022, seven percent of Dakota County 9th graders and 27 percent of 11th graders reported ever being sexually active, slightly below the state for both grades.
- In 2022, 93 percent of 9th graders and 96 percent of 11th graders who were sexually active reported using birth control the last time they had intercourse, slightly above the state for both grades.

Children with special health needs

- The preschool population in Early Childhood Special Education grew by 14 percent from 2014 to 2023.
- Seventeen percent of the K-12 population was enrolled in special education in public schools in the 2022-23 school year, slightly below Minnesota.



For information about breastfeeding, see the Nutrition profile.

For more information:

- Bright Futures, American Academy of Pediatrics <http://brightfutures.aap.org/>
- U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) www.cdc.gov
- Minnesota Department of Health www.health.state.mn.us
- Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs www.amchp.org
- March of Dimes www.marchofdimes.org

The Dakota County Public Health Department is accredited by the national Public Health Accreditation Board.

For more information about the Dakota County community health assessment, email public.health@co.dakota.mn.us or call 651.554.6100.

