The health of mothers, infants, and children is important for the health of the current generation and future generations. Healthy growth and development of infants depends on the health of the mother before conception and the health and safety of mother and infant during delivery. A positive, supportive environment for mother and infant following birth is also critical.

**Pregnancies and births in Dakota County**

- Dakota County had an estimated 80,007 women of childbearing age (15-44 years) in 2015.
- In 2015, there were 5,277 births to Dakota County residents.

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

- Sixty percent of U.S. women of childbearing age did not take folic acid supplements daily (2007).
- In 2015, five percent of Dakota County mothers smoked during pregnancy, a decrease from six percent in 2014.

**Unintended pregnancy**

- Eleven percent of pregnancies in Dakota County residents resulted in induced abortions, slightly below the state percent (2014). The abortion rate per 1,000 females ages 15-44 dropped by 18 percent from 2010 to 2014.
- Twenty-six percent of live births to Dakota County residents in 2015 were to unmarried mothers – a percent that decreased slightly from 2011 to 2015. (NOTE: Not all births to unmarried mothers are unintended).
- One percent of live births to Dakota County mothers were to mothers younger than 19 years old (2015).
- Thirty-nine percent of Minnesota mothers surveyed in 2011 said their pregnancy was unintended.

**Infant mortality**

- In 2015, 25 Dakota County infants under one year died. The infant death rate declined from 2006 to 2011.
Early prenatal care is associated with improved birth outcomes

- Eighty-three percent of Dakota County mothers started prenatal care in the first trimester (2015), a rate that has slightly decreased since 2006.
- Three percent of Dakota County mothers started prenatal care in the third trimester or had no prenatal care (2015).
- In 2015, 4.5 percent of live singleton births in Dakota County were low-birthweight, similar to the state. The percentage remained stable from 2011 to 2015.
- 7.5 percent of singleton births in 2015 in Dakota County were preterm, a percentage that is slightly less than the state overall and has decreased since 2013.
- One in ten women suffer from depression during pregnancy or within the first year of delivery.

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 2011 to 2015 (19 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 pregnancy and parenting

- The rate of pregnancy for 15-19 year olds in Dakota County decreased by 34 percent from the period 2008-2010 to the period 2012-2014.
- The Dakota County rate for 15-19 year olds is below the state for the period 2012-2014.

Adolescent reproductive health

- In 2016, 10 percent of Dakota County 9th graders and 31 percent of 11th graders reported ever being sexually active. In 2016, the percents for both grades were below the state (11 percent for 9th graders and 35 percent for 11th graders).
- In 2016, 84 percent of 9th graders and 93 percent of 11th graders who were sexually active reported using birth control the last time they had intercourse, slightly below the state for 9th grade and slightly above the state for 11th grade.

Children with special health needs

- The preschool population in Early Childhood Special Education grew by 20 percent from 2007 to 2016.
- 13.5 percent of the K-12 population was enrolled in special education in public schools in the 2015-16 school year, similar to Minnesota.

For information about breastfeeding, see the Nutrition profile.

About this Community Health Profile
For more information about the Dakota County community health assessment, contact: Melanie Countryman, Epidemiologist (melanie.countryman@co.dakota.mn.us or 651-554-6131).

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