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.

**Pregnancies and births in Dakota County**

- Dakota County had an estimated 80,473 women of childbearing age (15-44 years) in 2017.
- In 2017, there were 5,144 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 (2012-2015).
- In 2016, five percent of Dakota County mothers smoked during pregnancy, the same as 2015.

**Unintended pregnancy**

- In 2017, 14 percent of pregnancies in Dakota County residents resulted in induced abortions, slightly above the state (12 percent). The abortion rate per 1,000 females ages 15-44 increased from 2013 to 2017.
- Twenty-seven percent of live births to Dakota County residents in 2017 were to unmarried mothers – a percent that was stable from 2013 to 2017. (NOTE: Not all births to unmarried mothers are unintended).
- Two percent of live births to Dakota County mothers were to mothers younger than 19 years old (2017).
- Twenty-six percent of Minnesota mothers surveyed in 2013 said their pregnancy was unintended.

**Infant mortality**

- In 2017, 20 Dakota County infants under one year died.
- The infant death rate increased from 2009 to 2014.
Early prenatal care is associated with improved birth outcomes

- Eighty-three percent of Dakota County mothers started prenatal care in the first trimester (2017), a rate that has decreased since 2008.
- Three percent of Dakota County mothers started prenatal care in the third trimester or had no prenatal care (2017).
- In 2017, five percent of live singleton births in Dakota County were low-birthweight, similar to the state. The percentage was stable from 2013 to 2017.
- Seven percent of singleton births in 2017 in Dakota County were preterm, a percentage that is similar to the state overall and was stable since 2013.
- One in ten women suffer from depression during pregnancy or within the first year of delivery.

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, 81 percent of 9th graders and 91 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 29 percent from 2010 to 2019.
- Fifteen percent of the K-12 population was enrolled in special education in public schools in the 2018-19 school year, similar to Minnesota.

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 2013 to 2017 (25 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 2008-2012 to the period 2013-2017.
- The Dakota County rate for 15-19 year olds is below the state for the period 2013-2017.

For more information:
- U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)
- Minnesota Department of Health [www.health.state.mn.us](http://www.health.state.mn.us)
- Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs [www.amchp.org](http://www.amchp.org)
- March of Dimes [www.marchofdimes.org](http://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.