

About 1 out of every 33 babies is born with a major birth defect.

Birth defects cause one in five deaths among infants less than a year old.

Birth defects lead to \$2.5 billion per year in hospital costs alone in the U.S.

**Selected birth defects counts and birth prevalence, Minnesota and US**

Defects	Minnesota		US <sup>‡</sup>	
	Annual no. of cases	Birth prevalence*	Annual no. of cases	Birth prevalence*
<b>Central nervous system</b>				
Anencephalus	--	--	1,009	2.51
Spina bifida without anencephalus	--	--	1,477	3.68
<b>Cardiovascular</b>				
Transposition of great arteries	--	--	1,901	4.73
Tetralogy of Fallot	--	--	1,574	3.92
Atrioventricular septal defect (also known as endocardial cushion defect)	--	--	1,748	4.36
Hypoplastic left heart syndrome	--	--	975	2.43
<b>Orofacial</b>				
Cleft lip with and without cleft palate	--	--	4,209	10.47
Cleft palate without cleft lip	--	--	2,567	6.39
<b>Musculoskeletal</b>				
Upper limb defect	--	--	1,521	3.79
Lower limb defect	--	--	763	1.90
Gastroschisis	--	--	1,497	3.73
<b>Chromosomal</b>				
Down syndrome	--	--	5,132	12.78

\* per 10,000 live births

‡ estimates based on pooled data from birth years 1999-2001

-- No data available

Note: Due to variability in the methods used by state birth defects surveillance systems and differences in populations and risk factors, state prevalence estimates may not be directly comparable with national estimates or those of other states.

**Preventing birth defects**

- The causes of about 70% of birth defects are unknown.
- Many birth defects happen during early pregnancy, often before a woman knows she is pregnant.
- Addressing health risks and behaviors before pregnancy can reduce the risk of poor birth outcomes, including some birth defects.
- All women who could become pregnant should take 400 micrograms of folic acid every day to help prevent serious defects of the baby's brain and spinal cord.

**Program information:**

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**Minnesota's Birth Defect Surveillance System**

The Birth Defects Program began active surveillance data collection in mid-2005. The program gathers data about babies diagnosed within the first year of life with ICD-CM9 codes 740 -760. Data will be available in 2009 for babies born in Hennepin and Ramsey counties in Minnesota (about 50% of state births).

**How birth defects data are used in Minnesota**

Birth defects data are used to:

- Monitor prevalence trends of birth defects to detect emerging health concerns and identify affected populations,
- Ensure appropriate services are provided to affected families,
- Prevent birth defects through targeted education,
- Educate physicians and the public regarding birth defects, and
- Stimulate research on risk factors, treatment, prevention, and the cure of birth defects.