

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.

Defects	Mississippi [†]		US [‡]	
	Annual no. of cases	Birth prevalence*	Annual no. of cases	Birth prevalence*
Central nervous system				
Anencephalus	3	0.70	1,009	2.51
Spina bifida without anencephalus	12	2.80	1,477	3.68
Cardiovascular				
Transposition of great arteries	13	3.04	1,901	4.73
Tetralogy of Fallot	20	4.67	1,574	3.92
Atrioventricular septal defect (also known as endocardial cushion defect)	5	1.17	1,748	4.36
Hypoplastic left heart syndrome	6	1.40	975	2.43
Orofacial				
Cleft lip with and without cleft palate	43	10.04	4,209	10.47
Cleft palate without cleft lip	27	6.31	2,567	6.39
Musculoskeletal				
Upper limb defect	8	1.87	1,521	3.79
Lower limb defect	1	0.23	763	1.90
Gastroschisis	38	8.88	1,497	3.73
Chromosomal				
Down syndrome	23	5.37	5,132	12.78

Selected birth defects counts and birth prevalence, Mississippi and US

* per 10,000 live births

† estimates based on data from birth year 2004

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

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.

Mississippi’s Birth Defect Surveillance System

The Birth Defects Surveillance registry is housed in the Office of Child and Adolescent Health, Division of Genetic Services. Section 41-21-205 of the Mississippi Code established a birth defects surveillance registry in the Mississippi State Department of Health. Effective January 2000, all hospitals, clinics, and other health facilities that serve patients from birth to 21 years of age began reporting to the Mississippi Birth Defects Surveillance Registry.

How birth defects data are used in Mississippi

The data reported to the Mississippi Birth Defects Surveillance Registry is monitored regularly and systematically, for changes in incidence or other unusual patterns suggesting preventable causes. The data is used to ensure that children identified with birth defects are placed in a system of care.

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