

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	New Mexico		US [†]	
	Annual no. of cases	Birth prevalence*	Annual no. of cases	Birth prevalence*
Central nervous system				
Anencephalus	12 [†]	4.44	1,009	2.51
Spina bifida without anencephalus	15 [†]	5.63	1,477	3.68
Cardiovascular				
Transposition of great arteries	4 [§]	1.44	1,901	4.73
Tetralogy of Fallot	3 [§]	1.26	1,574	3.92
Atrioventricular septal defect (also known as endocardial cushion defect)	--	--	1,748	4.36
Hypoplastic left heart syndrome	3 [§]	1.26	975	2.43
Orofacial				
Cleft lip with and without cleft palate	35 [†]	13.03	4,209	10.47
Cleft palate without cleft lip	18 [†]	6.59	2,567	6.39
Musculoskeletal				
Upper limb defect	7 [§]	2.52	1,521	3.79
Lower limb defect	5 [§]	1.80	763	1.90
Gastroschisis	17 [†]	6.14	1,497	3.73
Chromosomal				
Down syndrome	28 [§]	9.91	5,132	12.78

Selected birth defects counts and birth prevalence, New Mexico and US

* per 10,000 live births

[†] estimates based on pooled data from birth years 2001-2005

[§] estimates based on pooled data from birth years 2004-2005

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.

New Mexico’s Birth Defect Surveillance System

There are over 29,000 births per year in New Mexico. Since 1995, the New Mexico Birth Defects Prevention and Surveillance System (BDPASS) at the New Mexico Department of Health has monitored birth defects among infants born to residents of New Mexico. Babies born with birth defects have a greater chance of illness and long term disability than babies without birth defects. By identifying these children early in their life, we have the opportunity to assure that they receive the medical care and early intervention services to allow them to be productive adults and fulfill their potential.

Program information:

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How birth defects data are used in New Mexico

Birth defects data are used to:

- Monitor the prevalence of birth defects in the state and to identify clusters that should be investigated,
- Target prevention activities,
- Assess the impact of screening and prevention activities, and
- Link children to necessary services such as case management for those that have complex medical needs and early intervention services to support the child’s development.