

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 \$2.6 billion per year in hospital costs alone in the U.S.

Selected birth defects counts and birth prevalence, Minnesota (Hennepin and Ramsey Counties) and US

Defects	Minnesota (Hennepin and Ramsey Counties only) [†]		US [‡]	
	Average annual no. of cases	Birth prevalence*	Average annual no. of cases	Birth prevalence*
Central nervous system				
Anencephalus	2	0.62	1,009	2.51
Spina bifida without anencephalus	12	4.92	1,477	3.68
Cardiovascular				
Transposition of great arteries	18	7.18	1,901	4.73
Tetralogy of Fallot	19	7.79	1,574	3.92
Atrioventricular septal defect (also known as endocardial cushion defect)	16	6.36	1,748	4.36
Hypoplastic left heart syndrome	8	3.28	975	2.43
Orofacial				
Cleft lip with and without cleft palate	33	13.5	4,209	10.47
Cleft palate without cleft lip	22	9.02	2,567	6.39
Musculoskeletal				
Upper limb defect	6	2.26	1,521	3.79
Lower limb defect	5	1.85	763	1.90
Gastroschisis	17	6.77	1,497	3.73
Chromosomal				
Down syndrome	53	21.7	5,132	12.78

* per 10,000 live births

[†] estimates based on pooled data from birth years 2006-2007

[‡] 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.

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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 are available 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.