

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, Utah and US**

Defects	Utah <sup>†</sup>		US <sup>‡</sup>	
	Annual no. of cases	Birth prevalence*	Annual no. of cases	Birth prevalence*
<b>Central nervous system</b>				
Anencephalus	12	2.33	1,009	2.51
Spina bifida without anencephalus	21	4.22	1,477	3.68
<b>Cardiovascular</b>				
Transposition of great arteries	22	4.46	1,901	4.73
Tetralogy of Fallot	18	3.61	1,574	3.92
Atrioventricular septal defect (also known as endocardial cushion defect)	27	5.50	1,748	4.36
Hypoplastic left heart syndrome	18	3.65	975	2.43
<b>Orofacial</b>				
Cleft lip with and without cleft palate	66	13.29	4,209	10.47
Cleft palate without cleft lip	38	7.63	2,567	6.39
<b>Musculoskeletal</b>				
Upper limb defect	32	6.34	1,521	3.79
Lower limb defect	9	1.77	763	1.90
Gastroschisis	26	5.30	1,497	3.73
<b>Chromosomal</b>				
Down syndrome	78	15.74	5,132	12.78

\* per 10,000 live births

<sup>†</sup> estimates based on pooled data from birth years 2001-2005

<sup>‡</sup> 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.

**Utah’s Birth Defect Surveillance System**

The Utah Birth Defect Network (UBDN) is a state wide population based birth defect surveillance system. The UBDN began by monitoring neural tube defects in 1994. Select defects were added each year until all major structural malformations were being tracked in 1999. Multiple sources of ascertainment are maintained to insure accuracy and completeness of data.

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

The UBDN has monitored over 650,000 births. Data has been collected on over 11,000 children born in Utah with major structural birth defects. These data are used to: detect and respond to birth defect epidemics in Utah; identify potential risk factors; plan, establish and evaluate primary prevention activities; and to identify potential participants for specific birth defect studies. The UBDN also provides information to concerned parents and their healthcare providers regarding their child’s birth defect.

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