

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, Arizona and US

Defects	Arizona [†]		US [‡]	
	Average annual no. of cases	Birth prevalence*	Average annual no. of cases	Birth prevalence*
Central nervous system				
Anencephalus	15	1.53	1,009	2.51
Spina bifida without anencephalus	36	3.83	1,477	3.68
Cardiovascular				
Transposition of great arteries	38	4.04	1,901	4.73
Tetralogy of Fallot	39	4.12	1,574	3.92
Atrioventricular septal defect (also known as endocardial cushion defect)	--	--	1,748	4.36
Hypoplastic left heart syndrome	21	2.19	975	2.43
Orofacial				
Cleft lip with and without cleft palate	120	12.67	4,209	10.47
Cleft palate without cleft lip	78	8.26	2,567	6.39
Musculoskeletal				
Upper limb defect	27	2.88	1,521	3.79
Lower limb defect	10	1.03	763	1.90
Gastroschisis	49	5.12	1,497	3.73
Chromosomal				
Down syndrome	115	12.09	5,132	12.78

* per 10,000 live births

† estimates based on pooled data from birth years 2003-2006

-- 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.

Arizona's Birth Defect Monitoring Program

Since 1986 the Arizona program has monitored the prevalence of major birth defects among Arizona infants in all 15 counties. Arizona Department of Health Services staff obtain this information by visiting all Arizona hospitals and selected clinics. A rapid reporting system provides current information on neural tube defects, cleft lip/palate, and gastroschisis within 6 months of birth. Duplicate records are merged and the data used to generate summary reports. The program operates through state funds and federal grant monies.

How birth defects data are used in Arizona

Data are used for birth defects prevention activities and improving access to health services through partnerships, publications, dissemination of reports, community awareness, and educational activities. The program monitors the state trend of spina bifida, which is often preventable by consuming the vitamin folic acid before conception. The goal of the rapid reporting system is to provide families of living children with information and resources for follow-up medical and social services.

Program information:

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