

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, Oregon and US**

Defects	Oregon		US <sup>‡</sup>	
	Average annual no. of cases	Birth prevalence*	Average annual no. of cases	Birth prevalence*
<b>Central nervous system</b>				
Anencephalus	--	--	1,009	2.51
Spina bifida without anencephalus	--	--	1,477	3.68
<b>Cardiovascular</b>				
Transposition of great arteries	--	--	1,901	4.73
Tetralogy of Fallot	--	--	1,574	3.92
Atrioventricular septal defect (also known as endocardial cushion defect)	--	--	1,748	4.36
Hypoplastic left heart syndrome	--	--	975	2.43
<b>Orofacial</b>				
Cleft lip with and without cleft palate	--	--	4,209	10.47
Cleft palate without cleft lip	--	--	2,567	6.39
<b>Musculoskeletal</b>				
Upper limb defect	--	--	1,521	3.79
Lower limb defect	--	--	763	1.90
Gastroschisis	--	--	1,497	3.73
<b>Chromosomal</b>				
Down syndrome	--	--	5,132	12.78

\* per 10,000 live births

‡ 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.

**Oregon Birth Defect Surveillance**

Oregon does not have a birth defects surveillance system.

**Program information:**

Kenneth D. Rosenberg, MD, MPH  
 Oregon Public Health Division  
 E-mail: [ken.d.rosenberg@state.or.us](mailto:ken.d.rosenberg@state.or.us)