

In the United States, 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, Nebraska and US

Defects	Nebraska [†]		US [‡]	
	Average annual no. of cases	Birth prevalence*	Average annual no. of cases	Birth prevalence*
Central nervous system				
Anencephalus	9	3.4	859	2.1
Spina bifida without anencephalus	18	6.9	1,460	3.5
Cardiovascular				
Transposition of great arteries	13	4.7	1,252	3.0
Tetralogy of Fallot	8	3.0	1,657	4.0
Atrioventricular septal defect	3	1.2	1,966	4.7
Hypoplastic left heart syndrome	8	2.9	960	2.3
Orofacial				
Cleft lip with and without cleft palate	27	10.3	4,437	10.6
Cleft palate without cleft lip	17	6.3	2,651	6.4
Musculoskeletal				
Upper limb defect	7	2.7	1,454	3.5
Lower limb defect	4	1.7	701	1.7
Gastroschisis	14	5.2	1,871	4.5
Chromosomal				
Down syndrome	40	15.0	6,037	14.5

* per 10,000 live births

[†] estimates based on pooled data from birth years 2004-2008

[‡] estimates based on pooled data from birth years 2004-2006

-- 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 prevent serious defects of the baby’s brain and spinal cord.

Nebraska’s Birth Defect Surveillance System

How birth defects data are used in Nebraska

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