

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, Nevada (2005-2007) and US

Defects	Nevada		US [‡]	
	Annual no. of cases	Birth prevalence*	Annual no. of cases	Birth prevalence*
Central nervous system				
Anencephalus	2	0.51	859	2.1
Spina bifida without anencephalus	7	1.8	1,460	3.5
Cardiovascular				
Transposition of great arteries	17	4.2	1,252	3.0
Tetralogy of Fallot	25	6.3	1,657	4.0
Atrioventricular septal defect (also known as endocardial cushion defect)	12	3.0	1,966	4.7
Hypoplastic left heart syndrome	9	2.3	960	2.3
Orofacial				
Cleft lip with and without cleft palate	38	9.5	4,437	10.6
Cleft palate without cleft lip	15	3.9	2,651	6.4
Musculoskeletal				
Upper limb defect	6	1.4	1,454	3.5
Lower limb defect	5	1.1	701	1.7
Gastroschisis	--	--	1,871	4.5
Chromosomal				
Down syndrome	56	14.2	6,037	14.5

* per 10,000 live births

‡ estimates based on pooled data from birth years 2005-2008

-- 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.

Nevada's Birth Defect Surveillance System

It is a statewide population based surveillance system, collecting data on major birth defects and genetic diseases following ICD-9CM codes, covering all live births and still births with 20 weeks and greater gestational age. Collection of maternal substance abused babies is also carried out side by side. Program started from 2005; complete data is available from 2005 to 2007. Number of births covered in 2007 is 40,703. Prevalence rate of major birth defects is 3.95 in 2005 through 2007. Currently, collecting data for the year 2008. Program is totally funded by the State through collection of service fees.

Program information:

Brad Towle, MA, MPA
 Nevada Birth Defects Registry
 E-mail: btowle@health.nv.gov

Prasanjit Chakma, MBBS, MPH
 Nevada Birth Defects Registry
 E-mail: pchakma@health.nv.gov

How birth defects data are used in Nevada

Date is used for routine statistical monitoring, public health program evaluation, tracking of birth defects incidence and prevalence, referral for services, and determination of prevention strategies.