

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, New York and US**

Defects	New York <sup>†</sup>		US <sup>‡</sup>	
	Average annual no. of cases	Birth prevalence*	Average annual no. of cases	Birth prevalence*
<b>Central nervous system</b>				
Anencephalus	11	0.44	1,009	2.51
Spina bifida without anencephalus	50	2.02	1,477	3.68
<b>Cardiovascular</b>				
Transposition of great arteries	69	2.79	1,901	4.73
Tetralogy of Fallot	116	4.70	1,574	3.92
Atrioventricular septal defect (also known as endocardial cushion defect)	72	2.90	1,748	4.36
Hypoplastic left heart syndrome	61	2.46	975	2.43
<b>Orofacial</b>				
Cleft lip with and without cleft palate	180	7.27	4,209	10.47
Cleft palate without cleft lip	139	5.63	2,567	6.39
<b>Musculoskeletal</b>				
Upper limb defect	44	1.79	1,521	3.79
Lower limb defect	22	0.87	763	1.90
Gastroschisis	52	2.09	1,497	3.73
<b>Chromosomal</b>				
Down syndrome	297	12.01	5,132	12.78

\* per 10,000 live births

† estimates based on pooled data from birth years 2002-2006

‡ 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.

**New York's Birth Defect Surveillance System**

The New York State Department of Health Congenital Malformations Registry (CMR) is one of the largest statewide, population-based birth defects registries in the nation. The CMR was established by enactment of Part 22 of the State Sanitary Code in 1981. Reporting to the registry began in October 1982. Hospitals and physicians are required to report children up to two years of age diagnosed with a malformation. Case reports are received electronically on the Internet using the Health Provider Network, a secure system for electronically collecting and distributing health related data.

**How birth defects data are used in New York**

The birth defects data are used for routine statistical monitoring of birth defects in New York, generating annual report that summarizes birth defects by type, by organ system, and by county, and provide basis for research studies in searching for causes of birth defects. The CMR data are also used to link children with services in their home communities such as Early Intervention Program, to ensure that families of children identified in the Registry can find available resources and support groups.

**Program information:**

New York State Congenital Malformations Registry

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