

WOMEN'S HEALTH & BIRTH OUTCOMES | SC TRACKING

SC DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH VITAL STATISTICS META DATA

BACKGROUND

Vital Records is the state's official records keeper for vital information pertaining to births, deaths, marriages, and divorces occurring in South Carolina. South Carolina law requires the filing of birth and death certificates. This has been in effect since January 1, 1915. Live birth data pertains to all births to South Carolina residents within and beyond state lines. This information is derived from birth certificates. Infant mortality data for South Carolina residents is sourced from both birth and death certificates.

DATA LIMITATIONS

Data does not include clinical data such as lab tests, or information on a deceased individual's health status leading up to death. Additionally, data on vital events, such as births and deaths, can take a significant amount of time to be finalized and readily available by researchers.

ACCESS CONSTRAINTS

In accordance with standards established by the South Carolina Department of Public Health's (DPH) Bureau of Vital Statistics, numbers less than five are suppressed along with their associated rates to protect patient confidentiality.

USE CONSTRAINTS

Any user of this data must have reviewed and understood the metadata content before attempting to understand, interpret or use DPH Vital Statistics data. No attempt should be made to identify decedents through use of this data set. This is a public dataset and is not for commercial purposes. Any use of this data should contain proper data source acknowledge: SC DPH Vital Statistics. Additional data requests should be sent to SC DPH Vital Statistics.



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MEASURE SPECIFIC INFORMATION

The following data is displayed on the [Reproductive Health Dashboard](#):

Fertility Rate is defined as the number of live births occurring in a population over the total number of women of childbearing years (aged 15-44). Fertility rates are crucial for understanding population dynamics and planning for societal needs. The dashboard visualizes the total fertility rate per 1,000 women aged 15-44 from 2019-2023 at both the county and state level.

Breastfeeding Initiation refers to an infant receiving any breast milk or colostrum between delivery and discharge from the birthing facility. In the context of home births, it's defined as receiving any breast milk or colostrum before the completion of the birth certificate. Breastfeeding is a metric that is tracked as it provides optimal nutrition, boosts immunity, and reduces the risk of various illnesses, including infections, allergies, and chronic diseases later in life. Breastfeeding initiation data displayed on the dashboard include the percentage of breastfeeding at the county and state level from 2019-2023 as well as racial and ethnic breakouts.

Preterm Births is defined as births occurring prior to 37 weeks gestation. Preterm birth rates are a public health concern because they have higher rates of infant mortality and long-term health complications. Monitoring and reducing preterm birth rates are crucial for improving both infant and maternal health outcomes and reducing health care costs. The dashboard visualizes the percentage of preterm births by race and ethnicity in 2019-2023 at the county-level. Aggregated five-years intervals from 2013 are also available.

Low Birthweight are births that occurred with infants weighing less than 2,500 grams, or 5.5 pounds. Low birthweight data is a significant predictor of infant mortality and morbidity. It can also reveal trends in maternal health, health care access, and socioeconomic factors. The dashboard displays the percentage of low birthweight births by race and ethnicity in 2019-2023 at the county-level. Aggregated five-years intervals from 2013 are also available.



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MEASURE SPECIFIC INFORMATION

The following data is displayed on the [Reproductive Health Dashboard](#):

Infant mortality is the death of an infant before their first birthday. Infant mortality is a critical indicator of a society's overall health and well-being as high infant mortality rates often reflect underlying issues in healthcare access, socioeconomic conditions, and public health practices. Infant mortality variables displayed on the dashboard include the rate of infant mortality by race and ethnicity from 2014-2023 at the county-level. The rate of perinatal mortality (≥ 28 weeks gestation to < 7 days of age), neonatal mortality (< 28 days of age), and post-neonatal mortality (≥ 28 days to < 1 year of age) in 2019-2023 is also displayed at the county-level.

SUGGESTED CITATION

South Carolina Department of Public Health Vital Statistics. [Graphic name]. Available online: www.dph.sc.gov/tracking. Accessed on [date accessed].

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Learn more about DPH Vital Records here:

www.dph.sc.gov/public/vital-records/about-vital-records

The South Carolina Community Assessment Network (SCAN) is an interactive data retrieval system for community assessment, planning, and health practices that can be used to create tables, charts, and maps using select vital record data. This interactive tool can be accessed here:

apps.dhec.sc.gov/Health/scan/scan/index.aspx



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SC BIRTH DEFECTS PROGRAM META DATA

BACKGROUND

The South Carolina Birth Defects Program (SCBDP) is an active surveillance program established in 2006 at South Carolina's Department of Public Health. The SCBDP collects data on live-born infants and children under the age of 2 years born in-state to South Carolina residents. Data on pregnancy terminations, fetal deaths, and stillbirths are also collected. Active case ascertainment is determined by the qualified ICD-9-CM (740.0 - 758.32) and ICD-10 CM (Q00.0-Q93.81) diagnostic codes in accordance with the National Birth Defects Prevention Network Surveillance Guidelines. The SCBDP began abstracting ICD-10-CM codes for babies with a date of birth of 1/1/2016 and onward.

DATA LIMITATIONS

The data only includes babies born in South Carolina hospitals, which is retrieved from medical records. Those born in neighboring states are not included.

ACCESS CONSTRAINTS

In accordance with SCBDP guidelines, numbers less than five are suppressed along with their associated rates to protect patient confidentiality.

USE CONSTRAINTS

Any user of this data must have reviewed and understood the metadata content before attempting to understand, interpret, or use SCBDP data. No attempt should be made to identify anyone through use of this data set. This is a public dataset and is not for commercial purposes. Any use of this data should contain proper data source acknowledgement to: SC Birth Defects Program. Additional data requests should be made directly to SCBDP.



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MEASURE SPECIFIC INFORMATION

The crude rate of birth defects, per 10,000 live births, in 2019-2023 at the county-level is displayed on the [Reproductive Health Dashboard](#). This data is also displayed as five-year rolling averages from 2014-2023. The following birth defects are included:

Anencephaly: a birth defect in the formation of a baby's neural tube during development.

Cleft Lip with Cleft Palate: separations in the upper lip and mouth that occur while a fetus develops in the uterus

Cleft Lip without Cleft Palate: a birth defect where the baby's upper lip doesn't fully join during development, but the roof of the mouth does (palate)

Gastroschisis: a birth defect in which the baby's intestines extend outside the abdomen through a hole next to the belly button

Hypoplastic Left Heart Syndrome: a congenital heart defect in which the left side of the heart is severely underdeveloped and incapable of supporting the systemic circulation

Hypospadias: a rare congenital condition where the opening of the penis is on the underside of the organ

Limb Deficiencies: refers to the absence or incomplete formation of a limb or a portion of a limb in a fetus during pregnancy

Spina Bifida (without Anencephaly): a condition when the neural tube, which forms the brain and spinal cord, doesn't close completely in the early weeks of pregnancy

Tetralogy of Fallot: a congenital heart condition that has four issues in the heart

Transposition of the Great Arteries (Vessels): a serious congenital heart defect where the aorta and pulmonary artery are switched, meaning they are connected to the wrong ventricles



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Trisomy 21: a genetic condition caused when abnormal cell division results in extra genetic material from chromosome 21

- There is a higher risk of Trisomy 21 among live births when born to mothers over the age of 35. Therefore, Trisomy 21 is categorized by maternal ages < 35 and ≥ 35 .

Live births data is provided by SC DPH Vital Statistics to calculate the rate of birth defects per 10,000 live births.

This data is updated annually with the last update occurring on July 30, 2025.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Learn more about the National Birth Defects Prevention Network Surveillance Guidelines here:

www.nbdpn.org/birth-defects-surveillance-guidelines

Learn more about tracking birth defects here:

www.cdc.gov/birth-defects/tracking/index.html

SUGGESTED CITATION

South Carolina Birth Defects Program. [Graphic name]. Available online: www.dph.sc.gov/tracking. Accessed on [date accessed].



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