

Teen Birth Rate Rises for First Time in 14 Years

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The teen birth rate in the United States rose in 2006 for the first time since 1991, and unmarried childbearing also rose significantly, according to preliminary birth statistics released today by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

The statistics are featured in a new report, "Births: Preliminary Data for 2006," prepared by CDC's National Center for Health Statistics, and are based on data from over 99 percent of all births for the United States in 2006. A final report to follow will have more detailed data.

The report shows that between 2005 and 2006, the birth rate for teenagers 15-19 years rose 3 percent, from 40.5 live births per 1,000 females aged 15-19 years in 2005 to 41.9 births per 1,000 in 2006. This follows a 14-year downward trend in which the teen birth rate fell by 34 percent from its all-time peak of 61.8 births per 1,000 in 1991.

"It's way too early to know if this is the start of a new trend," said Stephanie Ventura, head of the Reproductive Statistics Branch at CDC. "But given the long-term progress we've witnessed, this change is notable."

The largest increases were reported for non-Hispanic black teens, whose overall rate rose 5 percent in 2006. The rate rose 2 percent for Hispanic teens, 3 percent for non-Hispanic white teens, and 4 percent for American Indian or Alaska Native teens.

The birth rate for the youngest teens aged 10-14 declined from 0.7 to 0.6 per 1,000, and the number of births to this age group fell 5 percent to 6,405. The birth rate for older teens aged 18-19 is 73 births per 1,000 population -- more than three times higher than the rate for teens aged 15-17 (22 per 1,000). Between 2005 and 2006, the birth rate rose 3 percent for teens aged 15-17 and 4 percent for teens aged 18-19.

The study also shows unmarried childbearing reached a new record high in 2006. The total number of births to unmarried mothers rose nearly 8 percent to 1,641,700 in 2006. This represents a 20 percent increase from 2002, when the recent upswing in nonmarital births began. The biggest jump was among unmarried women aged 25-29, among whom there was a 10 percent increase between 2005 and 2006.

In addition, the nonmarital birth rate also rose sharply, from 47.5 births per 1,000 unmarried females in 2005 to 50.6 per 1,000 in 2006 -- a 7-percent 1-year increase and a 16 percent increase since 2002.

The study also revealed that the percentage of all U.S. births to unmarried mothers increased to 38.5 percent, up from 36.9 percent in 2005.

The report contains other significant findings:

- The preliminary estimate of total births in the U.S. for 2006 was 4,265,996, a 3 percent increase -- or 127,647 more births than in 2005.
- Birth rates increased for women in their twenties, thirties and early forties between 2005 and 2006, as well as for teenagers.
- The cesarean delivery rate rose again in 2006, to 31.1 percent of all births, a 3 percent increase from 2005 and a new record high. The percentage of all births delivered by cesarean has climbed 50 percent over the last decade.
- The preterm birth rate rose slightly between 2005 and 2006, from 12.7 percent to 12.8 percent of all births. The percentage of births delivered before 37 weeks of gestation has risen 21 percent since 1990.
- The low birthweight rate also rose slightly in 2006, from 8.2 percent in 2005 to 8.3 percent in 2006, a 19 percent jump since 1990.
- As a result of the increases in the birth rates for women aged 15-44, the total fertility rate -- an estimate of the average number of births that a group of women would have over their lifetimes -- increased 2 percent in 2006 to 2,101 births per 1,000 women. This is the highest rate since 1971 and the first time since then that the rate was above replacement -- the level at which a given generation can replace itself.

More information on maternal and infant health birth characteristics, including the latest information on multiple births, can be found in another new report released today: "[Births: Final Data for 2005](#)."

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