



## Low Birth Weight Outcomes Among Women in Florida, 2000-2001

Low birth weight is a major public health problem in Florida, contributing to added medical costs and infant mortality. During 2000 and 2001, over half (58.3 percent) of the low birth weight infants spent time in a neonatal intensive care unit, while only one out of ten (10.2 percent) normal birth weight infants spent time in a neonatal intensive care unit.

According to Florida PRAMS 2000 and 2001 survey data, 7.3 percent of the live births in Florida were low birth weight. The prevalence of low birth weight was:

- The highest among non-Hispanic Black women (11.7 percent); 6.0 percent among non-Hispanic White women, and 6.1 percent among Hispanic women.
- The highest among women age 19 and younger (9.7 percent); 7.8 percent among women age 20 to 24, and 7.5 percent among women age 35 year and older; the lowest (6.5 percent) among women age 25 to 34.
- Higher both among women with less than a high school education (9.1 percent) and among women with a high school education (8.2 percent) than among those with more than a high school education (5.9 percent).
- The highest among women with household incomes of \$15,600 or less (8.9 percent); 6.9 percent among women with incomes between \$15,601 and \$39,600, and 5.7 percent among women with incomes of \$39,601 or more.
- Higher among Medicaid recipients (9.3 percent) than among non-Medicaid recipients (5.9 percent).
- Higher among women who were not married (10.2 percent) than among married women (5.7 percent).
- Higher among women who smoked cigarettes during pregnancy (11.7 percent) than among those who did not smoke cigarettes during pregnancy (6.9 percent).
- Higher among women who were underweight before pregnancy (8.7 percent) than among those who were not underweight (7.0 percent); specifically higher than among women who were normal weight before pregnancy (6.7 percent).
- Higher among first-time mothers (8.4 percent) than among those with previous live births (6.7 percent).
- Higher among women whose most recent previous live births were low birth weight (19.3 percent) than among women with no such previous low birth weight history (5.2 percent).

This study shows that the highest prevalence of low birth weight infants in Florida is more likely to occur among women who are non-Hispanic Blacks, are age 19 and younger, have lower levels of education or household income, are Medicaid recipients, are not married, smoke cigarettes during pregnancy, are underweight before pregnancy, have no previous births, and/or have previously given birth to a low birth weight infant. The data underscore the importance both of not smoking cigarettes during pregnancy and of attaining a healthy maternal weight before pregnancy in the prevention of low birth weight. These findings may assist healthcare providers and program planners in Florida in providing effective information for reducing the prevalence of low birth weight.

The Florida Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS) is a random survey of recent mothers of live-born infants. It is designed to monitor the physical, economic, and social health of Florida mothers and newborns. PRAMS data are "weighted" so that the resulting estimates can be generalized to the entire state population. PRAMS data from 2000 and 2001 were combined to increase sample size and precision of estimates for this study.

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For more information about Florida PRAMS, please contact Helen Marshall, PRAMS Coordinator, at (850) 245-4444 extension 2415, or by e-mail at: [Helen\\_Marshall@doh.state.fl.us](mailto:Helen_Marshall@doh.state.fl.us); or Curt Miller, Epidemiologist, extension 2407, or by e-mail at: [Curt\\_Miller@doh.state.fl.us](mailto:Curt_Miller@doh.state.fl.us); or visit the department's web site at: [http://www.doh.state.fl.us/disease\\_ctrl/epi/prams/prams.htm](http://www.doh.state.fl.us/disease_ctrl/epi/prams/prams.htm).