The preterm birth rate in Arkansas was 11.8% in 2022, lower than the rate in 2021.

The preterm birth rate among babies born to Black birthing people is 1.5x higher than the rate among all other babies.

Many factors make birthing people more likely to have a preterm birth.

Note: More than one factor can occur at the same time. Hypertension, diabetes, smoking, and unhealthy weight occur prior to pregnancy. U.S. PTB rates are as follows: smoking: 15%; hypertension: 23%; unhealthy weight: 12%; diabetes: 29%; previous preterm: 30%; carrying multiples: 62%.

ARKANSAS

The infant mortality rate increased in the last decade; In 2021, 309 babies died before their first birthday

**INFANT MORTALITY RATE**

8.6

**U.S. RATE**

5.4


The infant mortality rate among babies born to Black birthing people is 1.4x the state rate

**Infant mortality rate per 1,000 live births**

- Hispanic: 5.0
- API: 6.5
- White: 6.7
- Black: 12.3

**Leading causes of infant death**

- Birth defects: 23.7%
- SUID: 17.7%
- PTB/LBW: 17.6%
- Maternal complications: 3.9%

Notes: API = Asian/Pacific Islander; AIAN = American Indian/Alaska Native; PTB/LBW = preterm birth and low birth weight; SUID = sudden unexpected infant death.
Arkansas

Birthing people in Arkansas have a **high vulnerability** to poor outcomes and are most vulnerable due to **overall physical health**

**MVI by county in Arkansas**

**Factors related to maternal vulnerability**

Higher scores indicate higher vulnerability

- **General Healthcare**: 32
- **Physical Environment**: 38
- **Mental Health and Substance Abuse**: 74
- **Socioeconomic Determinants**: 86
- **Reproductive Healthcare**: 92
- **Physical Health**: 94

**Notes**: The Maternity Vulnerability Index (MVI) is a tool used to understand where birthing people in each state may be more likely to have poor outcomes, including preterm birth and maternal death, due to clinical risk factors and other social, contextual, and environmental factors. Visit [https://mvi.surgoventures.org/](https://mvi.surgoventures.org/).

**Source**: Surgo Health, Maternal Vulnerability Index, 2023.

**The measures below are important indicators for how Arkansas is supporting the health of birthing people**

**43.5**

PER **100,000 BIRTHS**

**Maternal Mortality**

This shows the death rate of birthing people from complications of pregnancy or childbirth that occur during the pregnancy or within 6 weeks after the pregnancy ends.

**27.9**

PERCENT

**Low-Risk Cesarean Birth**

This shows Cesarean births for first-time moms, carrying a single baby, positioned head-first, and at least 37 weeks pregnant.

**20.1**

PERCENT

**Inadequate Prenatal Care**

Percent of birthing people who received care beginning in the fifth month or later or less than 50% of the appropriate number of visits for the infant's gestational age.


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**THE 2023 MARCH OF DIMES REPORT CARD: THE STATE OF MATERNAL AND INFANT HEALTH FOR AMERICAN FAMILIES**

For the full report card visit [www.marchofdimes.org/reportcard](http://www.marchofdimes.org/reportcard)

For details on data sources and calculations, see Technical Notes: [www.marchofdimes.org/reportcard-technicalnotes](http://www.marchofdimes.org/reportcard-technicalnotes)

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ARKANSAS

Adoption of the following policies and sufficient funding in Arkansas is critical to improve and sustain maternal and infant healthcare

MEDICAID EXTENSION
State has extended coverage for women to one year postpartum.

MEDICAID EXPANSION
State has adopted this policy, which allows birthing people greater access to preventative care during pregnancy.

PAID FAMILY LEAVE
State has required employers to provide a paid option while out on parental leave.

DOULA REIMBURSEMENT POLICY
State Medicaid agency is actively reimbursing doula care.

MATERNAL MORTALITY REVIEW COMMITTEE
State has a federally funded MMRC committee, which is recognized as essential to understanding and addressing the causes of maternal death.

FETAL AND INFANT MORTALITY REVIEW
State has a Fetal and Infant Mortality Review team or teams to identify and review causes of death.

PERINATAL QUALITY COLLABORATIVE
State has a federally funded PQC to identify and improve quality care issues in maternal and infant healthcare.

OVER 380,000 BABIES WERE BORN PRETERM IN 2022. EVERY DATA POINT REPRESENTS A PERSON WITH A UNIQUE STORY – HERE’S JUST ONE.

At 37 years old, Ashley Taylor got pregnant after her first round of IVF. The pregnancy went smoothly until, at 18 weeks, her water broke. She was put on bed rest in the hospital to help save the pregnancy. Ashley remained there for five weeks of excruciating back pain and uncertainty—until she went into labor. Julia was born at 23 weeks and six days, weighing 1 pound, 2.3 ounces. “I knew that I loved her more than anything from the very beginning when she came into this world and they asked me, ‘What do you want to do?’ And I said, ‘Everything possible.’ And now she’s an amazing little girl with so much personality.”

Far too many families are affected by prematurity. We advocate for policies outlined in this year’s 2023 March of Dimes Report Card to prioritize the health of all families—especially moms and babies of color.