The preterm birth rate in Kentucky was 11.7% in 2022, lower than the rate in 2021.

The preterm birth rate among babies born to Black birthing people is 1.3x higher than the rate among all other babies.

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

- Smoking (16.0% of births)
- Hypertension (22.8% of births)
- Unhealthy weight (13.4% of births)
- Diabetes (35.1% of births)
- Previous preterm (31.3% of births)
- Carrying multiples (68.6% of births)

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%.

KENTUCKY

The infant mortality rate decreased in the last decade; In 2021, 321 babies died before their first birthday

**Infant Mortality Rate**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Rate per 1,000 live births</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

U.S. Rate 5.4


The infant mortality rate among babies born to Black birthing people is 1.6x the state rate

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

- API: 4.0
- White: 5.3
- Hispanic: 6.1
- Black: 9.9

**Leading causes of infant death**

- Birth defects: 23.8
- PTB/LBW: 15.0
- SUID: 8.8
- Accidents: 8.5

Notes: API = Asian/Pacific Islander; AIAN = American Indian/Alaska Native; PTB/LBW = preterm birth and low birth weight; SUID = sudden unexpected infant death.
Birthing people in Kentucky have a very high vulnerability to poor outcomes and are most vulnerable due to mental health and substance use.

The measures below are important indicators for how Kentucky is supporting the health of birthing people:

- **38.4** 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.

- **27.3** 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.

- **14.1** 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.

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

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

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

**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.

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**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.