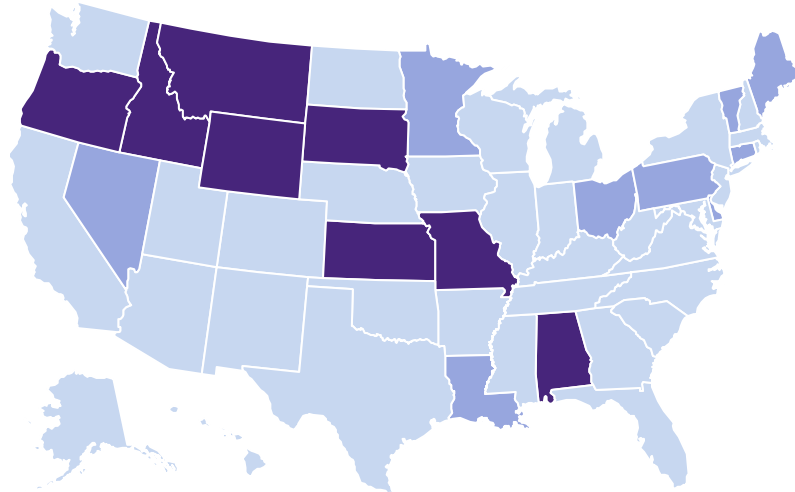


# PERINATAL DATA SNAPSHOTS:

United States  
Birth Defects

## Birth Defects Monitoring Program<sup>1-3</sup>

- Operational Program (33)
- Planning Program (9)
- No program (9)

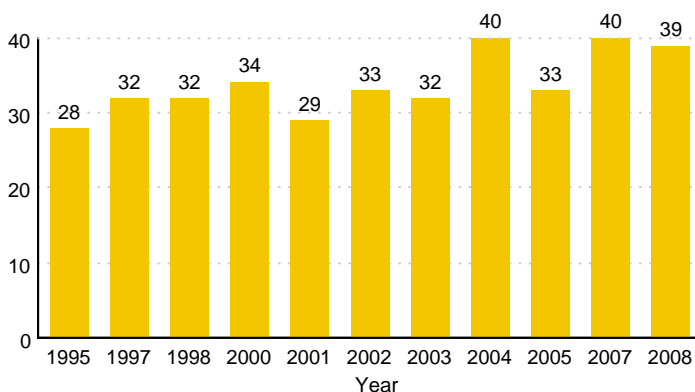


- In the United States, birth defects have been the leading cause of infant mortality for the past 20 years, accounting for 1 in 5 infant deaths.
- Each year at least 120,000 babies are born with major structural birth defects in the United States (about 3% of live births).
- Hospital costs for stays due to birth defects totaled \$2.6 billion for all birth defects and all ages. More than half of all hospital costs were related to cardiac and circulatory birth defects. Associated costs of physician care and other outpatient medical services are not included in this figure.
- Nearly three-quarters (33) of states and Puerto Rico have some type of birth defects surveillance program, while another nine are planning one. For more information on state birth defects surveillance programs, please visit the [National Birth Defects Prevention Network](#).

## Folic Acid Knowledge and Behavior, United States<sup>4</sup>

### Daily Use of Vitamin Containing Folic Acid

Percent of women ages 18-45



- Up to 70% of neural tube defects--birth defects of the brain and spinal cord--may be prevented if women consume 400 micrograms of folic acid daily, prior to and during the early weeks of conception.
- While 84% of women ages 18-45 surveyed in 2008 had heard of folic acid, only 11% of these women knew to take folic acid before pregnancy.
- In 2008, 39% of women surveyed reported taking a vitamin containing folic acid daily.

#### Footnotes

- Annual number of birth defects based on estimates from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
- March of Dimes Folic Acid Surveys are nationally representative telephone surveys targeting approximately 2000 English-speaking women ages 18-45 each year. Margin of error is +/-3%.
- Folic acid data shown for all available years.

#### Sources

- 1 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2008).
- 2 National Center for Health Statistics, period linked birth/infant death data (2013).
- 3 Russo CA and Elixhauser, A. Hospitalizations for Birth Defects, 2004. HCUP Statistical Brief #24. January 2007. Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality.
- 4 March of Dimes Folic Acid Surveys, conducted by Gallup.