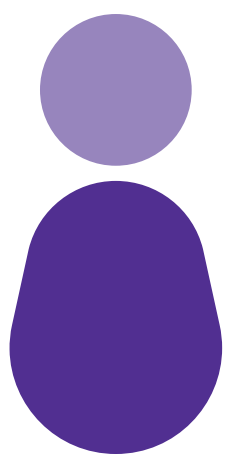


# Birth defects: An overview



Approximately 1 in every 33 babies in the US is born with a birth defect, ranging from mild to severe conditions.



Birth defects can be discovered at any time during pregnancy, but most are discovered during the first three months of pregnancy.

In some groups of people, the risk of a baby having certain birth defects may be higher due to health disparities.

## Unequal outcomes



March of Dimes is concerned with the impact that health disparities have on the health and well-being of babies, families and the US population. According to recent data:

American Indian/Alaska Native women have a much higher risk of having a baby with a cleft lip with or without cleft palate.

Hispanic women have the highest rates of spina bifida-affected births.

The risk of death due to birth defects has been found to be higher for babies born to non-Hispanic Black moms and babies born to Hispanic moms.

## Factors that drive disparities



A health disparity is a difference between the health of one group of people compared with the health of another group that has more advantages.

The causes of health disparities are complicated, but unequal treatment in healthcare for people of color and provider implicit bias are two factors that have a major impact on the health outcomes.

## Taking action



Even if you belong to a group that is affected by health disparities, there are things you can do to help increase the chances of having a healthy baby.

While not all birth defects can be prevented, getting early prenatal care, taking folic acid, and avoiding harmful substances during pregnancy can reduce the risk.

If you don't have access to regular healthcare, you can contact your local health department about healthcare services in your area.



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