



Births: Provisional Data for 2020

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Abstract

Objectives—This report presents provisional 2020 data on U.S. births. Births are shown by age and race and Hispanic origin of mother. Data on cesarean delivery and preterm births also are presented.

Methods—Data are based on 99.87% of all 2020 birth records received and processed by the National Center for Health Statistics as of February 11, 2021. Comparisons are made with final 2019 data and earlier years.

Results—The provisional number of births for the United States in 2020 was 3,605,201, down 4% from 2019. The general fertility rate was 55.8 births per 1,000 women aged 15–44, down 4% from 2019 to reach another record low for the United States. The total fertility rate was 1,637.5 births per 1,000 women in 2020, down 4% from 2019 to also reach another record low for the nation. In 2020, birth rates declined for women in all age groups 15–44 and were unchanged for adolescents aged 10–14 and women aged 45–49. The birth rate for teenagers aged 15–19 declined by 8% in 2020 to 15.3 births per 1,000 females; rates declined for both younger (aged 15–17) and older (aged 18–19) teenagers. The cesarean delivery rate rose to 31.8% in 2020; the low-risk cesarean delivery rate increased to 25.9%. The preterm birth rate declined to 10.09% in 2020, the first decline in the rate since 2014.

Keywords: birth rates • maternal and infant health • vital statistics • National Vital Statistics System

Introduction

This report from the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) is part of the National Vital Statistics System Rapid Release Quarterly Provisional Estimates. This series provides timely vital statistics for public health surveillance based on provisional data received and processed by NCHS as of a specified date. Estimates (quarterly and 12-month period ending with each quarter) for selected key vital statistics indicators are presented and released online through Quarterly Provisional Estimates (<https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/vsrr/nativity-dashboard.htm>). The series also includes reports that provide additional information on specific topics to help readers understand and interpret provisional natality and mortality data. Also, now available are provisional birth estimates developed to monitor health services utilization and maternal and infant outcomes that may be directly or indirectly impacted by COVID-19. Information is updated quarterly and is available from: <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/covid19/covid-birth.htm>.

Using provisional birth data for the 12 months of 2020 (1), this report supplements the Quarterly Provisional Estimates for 2020 by presenting longer temporal trends in context and more detail (by race and Hispanic origin of the mother and by state of residence). Statistics from previous provisional reports have been shown to be consistent with the final statistics for the year (2,3). This report presents provisional data on births and birth rates and cesarean delivery and preterm birth rates for the United States in 2020. Information on prenatal care, low birthweight, and other

health utilization and maternal and infant risk factors is presented with final birth data for 2020.

Methods

The provisional estimates shown in this report are collected via the National Vital Statistics System (4). Findings are based on all birth records received and processed by NCHS for calendar year 2020 as of February 11, 2021; these records represent nearly 100% (99.87%) of registered births occurring in 2020. Comparisons in this report are based on the final data for 2019 and earlier years (3). Data for American Samoa, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands were not available as of the release of the 2020 provisional birth file. Detailed information on reporting completeness and criteria may be found elsewhere (4,5).

Hispanic origin and race are reported separately on the birth certificate. Data shown by Hispanic origin include all persons of Hispanic origin of any race. Data for non-Hispanic persons are shown separately for each single-race group. Data by race are based on the revised standards issued by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) in 1997 (6). The race and Hispanic-origin groups shown are: non-Hispanic, single-race white; non-Hispanic, single-race black; non-Hispanic, single-race American Indian or Alaska Native (AIAN); non-Hispanic, single-race Asian; non-Hispanic, single-race Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (NHOPI); and Hispanic. For brevity, text references to race omit the term “single-race” (3).

Birth and fertility rates for the United States and by maternal race and Hispanic origin for 2020 were based on population estimates derived from the 2010 census as of July 1, 2020 (7).

Changes and differences presented in this report are statistically significant at the 0.05 level, unless noted otherwise. For information and discussion on computing rates and percentages and for detailed information on items presented in this report, see “User Guide to the 2019 Natality Public Use File” (4).

Beginning with Quarterly Provisional Estimates for Quarter 3, 2020, the use of record weights for provisional birth data was discontinued (1,5). This change was implemented because of the recent high levels of completeness of provisional birth data; the change in weighting had limited, if any, impact on the provisional birth estimates. Data shown in this report are based directly on the counts of all (unweighted) birth records received and processed by NCHS as of February 11, 2021.

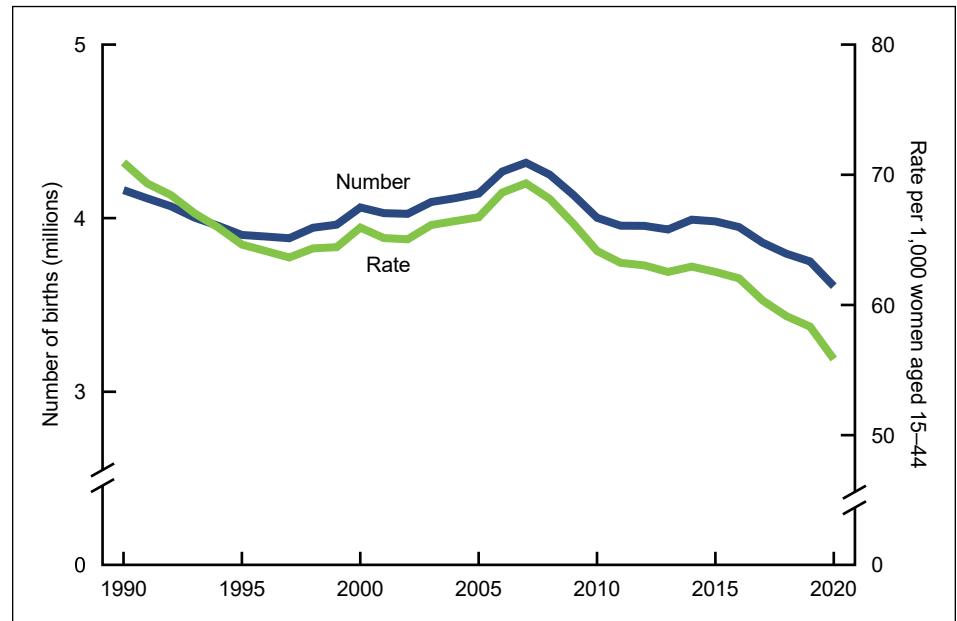
Results

Births and birth rates

Key findings, illustrated in [Tables 1–3](#) and [Figures 1 and 2](#), show:

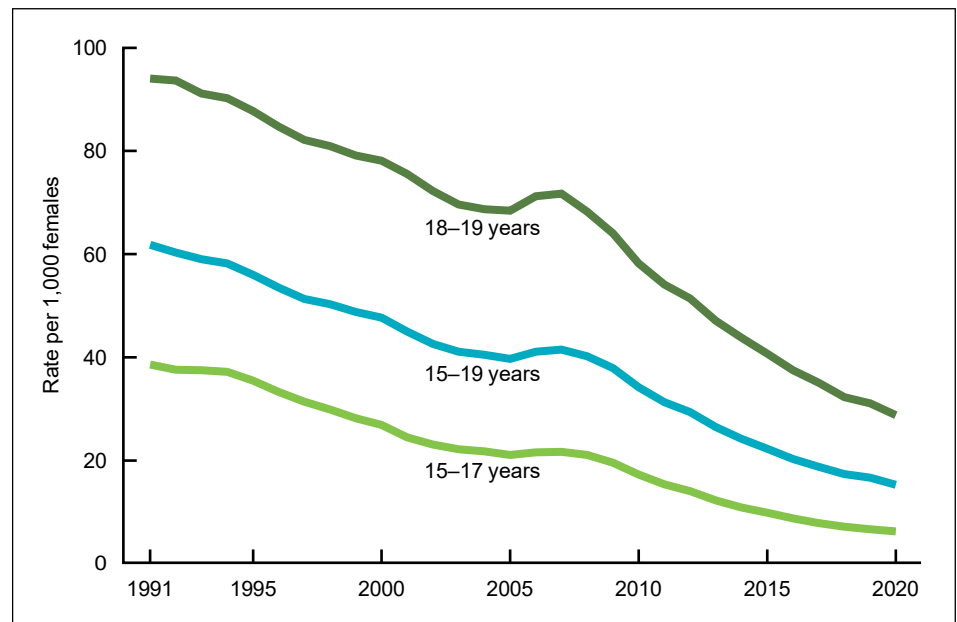
- The provisional **number of births** for the United States in 2020 was 3,605,201, down 4% from the number in 2019 (3,747,540) ([Tables 1–3](#) and [Figure 1](#)). This is the sixth consecutive year that the number of births has declined after an increase in 2014, down an average of 2% per year, and the lowest number of births since 1979 (3,8,9).
- From 2019 to 2020, the provisional number of births declined 3% for Hispanic women, 4% for non-Hispanic white and non-Hispanic black women, 6% for non-Hispanic AIAN women, and 8% for non-Hispanic Asian women ([Tables 2 and 3](#)). The 2% decline in the number of births for non-Hispanic NHOPI women was not significant.

Figure 1. Number of live births and general fertility rates: United States, final 1990–2019 and provisional 2020



SOURCE: National Center for Health Statistics, National Vital Statistics System, Natality.

Figure 2. Birth rates for teenagers, by age of mother: United States, final 1991–2019 and provisional 2020



SOURCE: National Center for Health Statistics, National Vital Statistics System, Natality.

- The provisional **general fertility rate** (GFR) for the United States in 2020 was 55.8 births per 1,000 women aged 15–44, down 4% from the rate in 2019 (58.3), another record low for the nation ([Tables 1 and 2](#) and [Figure 1](#)) (3,8,9). From 2014 to 2020, the GFR declined by an average of 2% per year.
- GFRs declined for each of the race and Hispanic-origin groups from 2019 to 2020, down 3% for non-Hispanic NHOPI women; 4% for non-Hispanic white, non-Hispanic black, and Hispanic women; 7% for non-Hispanic AIAN women; and 9% for non-Hispanic Asian women.

- The provisional **total fertility rate** (TFR) for the United States in 2020 was 1,637.5 births per 1,000 women, down 4% from the rate in 2019 (1,706.0), another record low for the nation (3,9,10). The TFR estimates the number of births that a hypothetical group of 1,000 women would have over their lifetimes, based on the age-specific birth rate in a given year.
- The TFR in 2020 was again below replacement—the level at which a given generation can exactly replace itself (2,100 births per 1,000 women). The rate has generally been below replacement since 1971 and has consistently been below replacement since 2007 (3,8,9).

Maternal age

- Provisional birth rates declined for women in all age groups 15–44 from 2019 to 2020 and were unchanged for adolescents aged 10–14 and women aged 45–49 (Table 1).
- The provisional **birth rate for teenagers** in 2020 was 15.3 births per 1,000 females aged 15–19, down 8% from 2019 (16.7), reaching another record low for this age group (Table 1 and Figure 2) (3,8–10). The rate has declined by 63% since 2007 (41.5), the most recent period of continued decline, and 75% since 1991, the most recent peak. The rate declined an average of 7% annually from 2007 to 2020 (3,8). The number of births to females aged 15–19 was 157,548 in 2020 (Table 1), down 8% from 2019 (3,8–10).
- The provisional birth rates for teenagers aged 15–17 and 18–19 in 2020 were 6.3 and 28.8 births, respectively, down by 6% and 7% from 2019, again reaching record lows for both groups (3,8–10). From 2007 to 2020, the rates for teenagers aged 15–17 and 18–19 declined by 9% and 7% per year, respectively (3,8).
- The provisional birth rate for females aged 10–14 was 0.2 births per 1,000 in 2020, unchanged since 2015.

- The provisional **birth rate for women aged 20–24** in 2020 was 62.8 births per 1,000 women, down 6% from 2019 (66.6), reaching yet another record low for this age group (Table 1) (3,8,9). This rate has declined by 40% since 2007. The number of births to women in their early 20s also declined by 6% from 2019 to 2020 (Table 1).
- The provisional **birth rate for women aged 25–29** was 90.0 births per 1,000 women, down 4% from 2019 (93.7), reaching another record low for this age group (3,8,9). The number of births to women in their late 20s declined 5% from 2019 to 2020.
- The provisional **birth rate for women aged 30–34** in 2020 was 94.8 births per 1,000 women, down 4% from 2019 (98.3) (Table 1) (3,8,9). The number of births to women in this age group declined by 2% from 2019 to 2020.
- The provisional **birth rate for women aged 35–39** was 51.7 births per 1,000 women, down 2% from 2019 (52.8). The number of births to women in this age group declined by 2% from 2019 to 2020.
- The provisional **birth rate for women aged 40–44** in 2020 was 11.8 births per 1,000 women, down 2% from 2019 (12.0). The rate for this age group had risen almost continuously from 1985 to 2019, by an average of 3% per year (3,8). The number of births to these women was essentially unchanged from 2019 to 2020.
- The provisional **birth rate for women aged 45–49** (which includes births to women aged 50 and over) was 0.9 births per 1,000 women, unchanged since 2015. However, the number of births to women in this age group declined 4% from 2019 to 2020 (Table 1).

Maternal and infant health characteristics

Key findings, illustrated in Tables 3 and 4 and Figure 3, show:

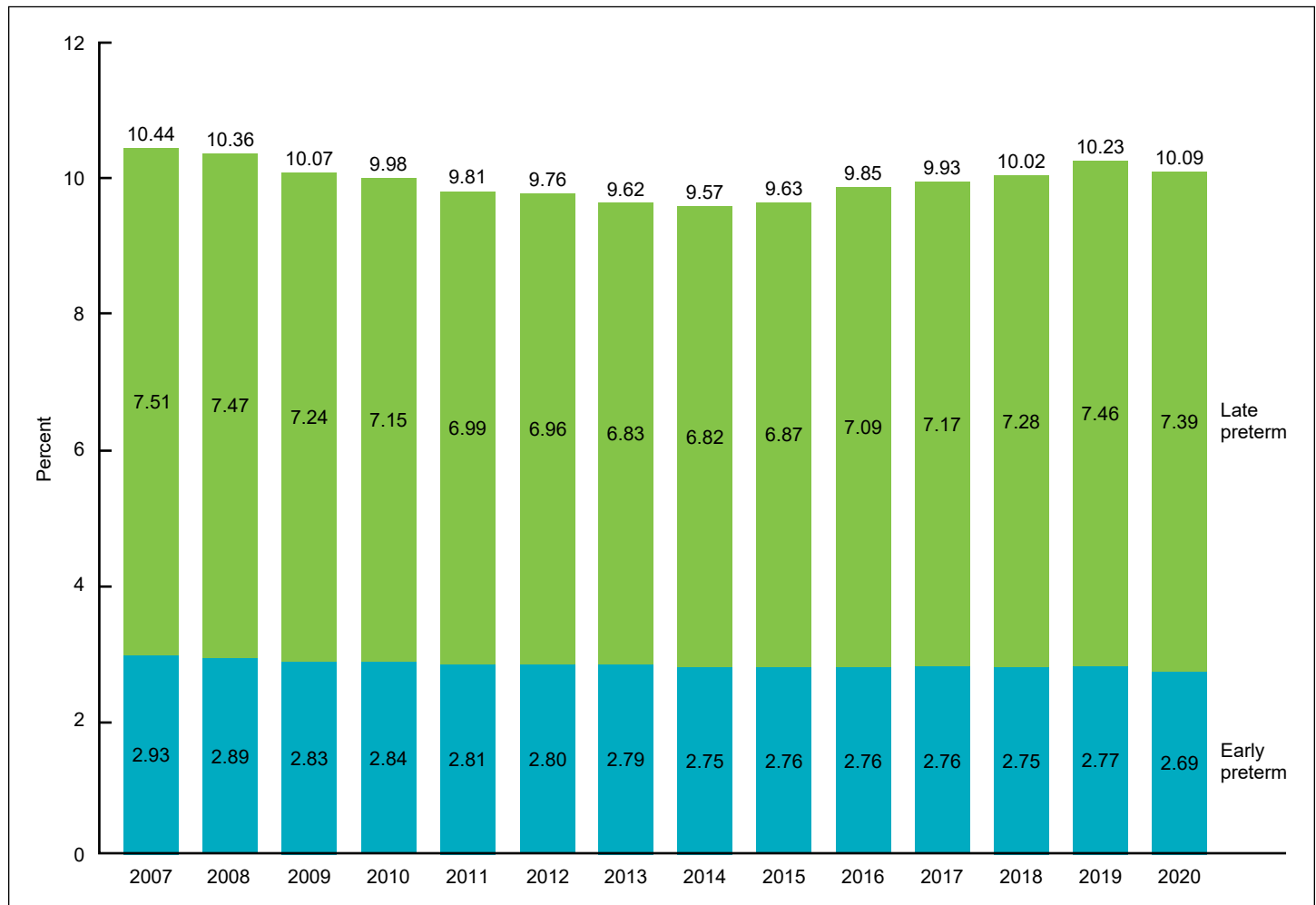
Cesarean delivery

- In 2020, the **overall cesarean delivery rate** increased to 31.8% from 31.7% in 2019 (Tables 3 and 4); despite this increase, the rate had generally declined from 2009 (32.9%) to 2019 (3). See Table 4 for state-specific rates.
- From 2019 to 2020, cesarean delivery rates increased for non-Hispanic white (30.7% to 30.8%), non-Hispanic black (35.9% to 36.3%), non-Hispanic NHOPI (30.2% to 32.3%), and Hispanic (31.3% to 31.4%) women; declines in rates for non-Hispanic AIAN (28.9% to 28.8%) and non-Hispanic Asian (32.7% to 32.6%) women were not statistically significant.
- The **low-risk cesarean delivery rate**, or cesarean delivery among nulliparous (first birth), term (37 or more completed weeks based on the obstetric estimate), singleton (one fetus), vertex (head first) births, also increased in 2020, to 25.9% from 25.6% in 2019 (Table 3).
- Low-risk cesarean rates increased from 2019 to 2020 for non-Hispanic white (24.7% to 24.9%), non-Hispanic black (30.0% to 30.6%), non-Hispanic NHOPI (26.1% to 29.1%), and Hispanic (24.8% to 25.2%) women; increases for non-Hispanic AIAN (22.8% to 23.6%) and non-Hispanic Asian (27.4% to 27.7%) women were not significant.

Preterm birth

- The **preterm birth rate** declined to 10.09% in 2020 from 10.23% in 2019 (Table 3 and Figure 3), the first decline in this rate since 2014. The percentage of infants born preterm (births at less than 37 completed weeks of gestation) fell 8% from 2007 (the most recent year for which national data are available based on the obstetric estimate of gestation [11]) to 2014, then rose 7% from 2014 (9.57%) to 2019 (3). See Table 4 for state-specific rates.

Figure 3. Preterm birth rates: United States, final 2007–2019 and provisional 2020



NOTE: Percentages may not add to totals due to rounding.
 SOURCE: National Center for Health Statistics, National Vital Statistics System, Natality.

- Declines were observed in both **early preterm** (less than 34 completed weeks of gestation) and **late preterm births** (34–36 weeks) from 2019 to 2020 (Table 3). The early preterm rate declined from 2.77% to 2.69%, the lowest level reported since at least 2007 (11). The late preterm rate declined from 7.46% to 7.39% (Figure 3).
- The preterm birth rate declined 3% among births to non-Hispanic Asian women (8.72% to 8.50%), 2% among non-Hispanic white women (9.26% to 9.10%), and 1% among Hispanic women (9.97% to 9.83%) from 2019 to 2020; changes for births to non-Hispanic AIAN (11.59% to 11.57%), non-Hispanic black (14.39%

to 14.35%), and non-Hispanic NHOPI (11.15% to 11.98%) women were not significant.

- Late preterm births declined among non-Hispanic Asian (6.59% to 6.42%) and non-Hispanic white mothers (6.99% to 6.90%), but changes for non-Hispanic black (9.45% to 9.54%), non-Hispanic AIAN (8.69% to 8.55%), non-Hispanic NHOPI (8.25% to 8.93%), and Hispanic (7.36% to 7.32%) mothers were not significant. Early preterm births were down for the three largest race and Hispanic-origin groups (non-Hispanic white, non-Hispanic black, and Hispanic), but were not significantly changed for the others (Table 3).

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Table 1. Births and birth rates, by age of mother: United States, final 2019 and provisional 2020

[Data for 2020 were based on a continuous file of records received from the states. Rates were per 1,000 women in specified age group. Rates for all ages were the total number of births (regardless of the age of the mother) per 1,000 women aged 15–44. Populations estimated as of July 1]

Age of mother	2020		2019	
	Number	Rate	Number	Rate
All ages	3,605,201	55.8	3,747,540	58.3
10–14	1,765	0.2	1,787	0.2
15–19	157,548	15.3	171,674	16.7
15–17	38,459	6.3	41,081	6.7
18–19	119,089	28.8	130,593	31.1
20–24	663,732	62.8	704,342	66.6
25–29	1,022,033	90.0	1,078,097	93.7
30–34	1,067,798	94.8	1,089,281	98.3
35–39	562,833	51.7	572,598	52.8
40–44	120,278	11.8	120,152	12.0
45–54 ¹	9,214	0.9	9,609	0.9

¹The birth rate for women in this age group was computed by relating the number of births to women aged 45 and over to women aged 45–49 because most of the births in this group were to women aged 45–49.

SOURCE: National Center for Health Statistics, National Vital Statistics System, Natality.

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Table 2. Total number of births and general fertility rates, by race and Hispanic origin of mother: United States, final 2019 and provisional 2020

[Data for 2020 were based on a continuous file of records received from the states. Rates were the total number of births (regardless of the age of the mother) per 1,000 women aged 15–44 in specified race and Hispanic-origin group. Populations estimated as of July 1]

Year	Non-Hispanic, single race						
	All races and origins ¹	White ²	Black ²	American Indian or Alaska Native ²	Asian ²	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander ²	Hispanic ³
	Number						
2020	3,605,201	1,839,565	528,448	26,638	218,860	9,612	863,949
2019	3,747,540	1,915,912	548,075	28,450	238,769	9,770	886,467
	Rate						
2020	55.8	53.2	59.0	52.4	50.1	72.6	62.8
2019	58.3	55.3	61.4	56.2	55.3	74.9	65.3

¹Includes births to race and origin groups not shown separately, such as Hispanic white, Hispanic black, and non-Hispanic multiple-race women, and births with origin not stated.

²Race and Hispanic origin are reported separately on birth certificates. Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race. In this table, non-Hispanic women are classified by race. Race categories are consistent with the 1997 Office of Management and Budget standards. Race categories in this table include only single race; that is, the race reported alone with only one race reported.

³Includes all persons of Hispanic origin of any race.

SOURCE: National Center for Health Statistics, National Vital Statistics System, Natality.

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Table 3. Total number of births and percentages of cesarean delivery and preterm births, by race and Hispanic origin of mother: United States, final 2019 and provisional 2020

[Data for 2020 were based on a continuous file of records received from the states]

Characteristic	Non-Hispanic, single race						
	All races and origins ¹	White ²	Black ²	American Indian or Alaska Native ²	Asian ²	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander ²	Hispanic ³
Number of births							
2020	3,605,201	1,839,565	528,448	26,638	218,860	9,612	863,949
2019	3,747,540	1,915,912	548,075	28,450	238,769	9,770	886,467
Cesarean delivery							
				Percent			
Total ⁴ :							
2020	31.8	30.8	36.3	28.8	32.6	32.3	31.4
2019	31.7	30.7	35.9	28.9	32.7	30.2	31.3
Low risk ⁵ :							
2020	25.9	24.9	30.6	23.6	27.7	29.1	25.2
2019	25.6	24.7	30.0	22.8	27.4	26.1	24.8
Gestational age⁶							
Preterm (under 37 weeks):							
2020	10.09	9.10	14.35	11.57	8.5	11.98	9.83
2019	10.23	9.26	14.39	11.59	8.72	11.15	9.97
Late preterm (34–36 weeks):							
2020	7.39	6.90	9.54	8.55	6.42	8.93	7.32
2019	7.46	6.99	9.45	8.69	6.59	8.25	7.36
Early preterm (under 34 weeks):							
2020	2.69	2.20	4.81	3.03	2.08	3.05	2.51
2019	2.77	2.27	4.94	2.90	2.13	2.90	2.61

¹Includes births to race and origin groups not shown separately, such as Hispanic white, Hispanic black, and non-Hispanic multiple-race women, and births with origin not stated.

²Race and Hispanic origin are reported separately on birth certificates. Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race. In this table, non-Hispanic women are classified by race. Race categories are consistent with the 1997 Office of Management and Budget standards. Race categories in this table include only single race; that is, the race reported alone with only one race reported.

³Includes all persons of Hispanic origin of any race.

⁴All births by cesarean delivery per 100 live births.

⁵Low-risk cesarean was defined as singleton, term (37 or more weeks of gestation based on obstetric estimate), vertex (not breech), cesarean deliveries to women having a first birth per 100 women delivering singleton, term, vertex first births.

⁶Completed weeks of gestation based on the obstetric estimate.

SOURCE: National Center for Health Statistics, National Vital Statistics System, Natality.

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Table 4. Total number of births, by state of residence, provisional 2020, and percentages of cesarean delivery and preterm births, by state of residence: United States, each state and territory, final 2019 and provisional 2020

[By place of residence. Data were based on a continuous file of records received from the states]

Area	Total number of births, 2020	Total cesarean		Low-risk cesarean ¹		Late preterm ²		Preterm ³	
		2020	2019	2020	2019	2020	2019	2020	2019
Percent									
United States ⁴	3,605,201	31.8	31.7	25.9	25.6	7.39	7.46	10.09	10.23
Alabama	57,634	35.0	34.6	29.0	28.4	9.40	8.99	12.90	12.48
Alaska	9,447	22.9	21.6	18.2	17.1	7.33	7.39	9.73	9.72
Arizona	76,923	28.4	27.8	22.8	21.9	7.13	6.99	9.48	9.37
Arkansas	35,210	33.8	34.5	26.5	27.7	8.56	8.73	11.76	11.93
California	419,612	30.5	30.8	24.0	23.8	6.51	6.62	8.76	8.95
Colorado	61,493	27.2	26.8	22.7	21.4	6.65	7.14	9.15	9.55
Connecticut	33,448	34.1	34.6	27.9	28.9	6.62	6.74	9.17	9.37
Delaware	10,336	31.8	31.5	24.9	24.4	7.48	7.41	10.35	10.70
District of Columbia	8,858	32.3	31.9	27.8	28.0	6.98	7.32	9.81	10.41
Florida	209,612	35.9	36.5	28.7	29.6	7.64	7.61	10.47	10.62
Georgia	122,266	33.9	34.3	27.7	28.2	8.18	8.34	11.41	11.69
Hawaii	15,730	26.4	26.8	23.0	23.1	7.56	7.75	10.06	10.57
Idaho	21,520	23.6	24.0	18.0	19.0	6.19	6.69	8.45	8.77
Illinois	133,207	30.8	30.6	24.7	24.7	7.63	7.87	10.32	10.70
Indiana	78,087	30.1	29.3	24.5	23.0	7.66	7.44	10.44	10.15
Iowa	36,080	30.2	29.6	24.8	23.6	7.54	6.89	9.90	9.48
Kansas	34,360	30.2	29.7	24.6	24.3	7.38	7.41	9.97	10.10
Kentucky	51,581	34.3	33.6	27.7	26.8	8.32	8.37	11.04	11.30
Louisiana	57,070	36.8	36.7	29.4	28.5	9.33	9.60	12.87	13.12
Maine	11,532	29.7	30.2	23.5	25.3	6.87	6.69	8.99	9.02
Maryland	68,523	33.7	33.0	28.7	27.6	7.29	7.32	10.12	10.28
Massachusetts	66,429	32.4	31.4	26.5	24.8	6.49	6.63	8.77	8.98
Michigan	103,846	32.5	32.0	27.4	26.5	7.40	7.34	10.23	10.27
Minnesota	63,387	28.5	27.6	24.7	23.8	6.82	6.85	9.11	9.26
Mississippi	35,457	38.2	38.5	30.9	30.7	10.27	10.35	14.20	14.58
Missouri	69,238	29.3	30.1	23.0	23.9	8.17	7.94	10.98	10.87
Montana	10,785	27.6	28.4	21.7	23.2	7.35	7.58	9.82	9.61
Nebraska	24,235	28.8	29.1	21.4	21.2	7.85	7.84	10.49	10.49
Nevada	33,632	32.9	32.8	27.2	26.8	7.86	7.87	10.69	10.67
New Hampshire	11,773	32.2	31.6	27.1	26.0	6.05	6.51	8.41	8.19
New Jersey	96,543	33.2	33.8	26.2	26.7	6.82	6.96	9.11	9.56
New Mexico	21,316	26.1	26.4	21.0	21.3	6.85	7.25	9.47	10.15
New York	209,172	33.7	33.2	28.7	28.1	6.63	6.62	9.23	9.18
North Carolina	116,674	30.0	29.1	23.6	22.5	7.66	7.60	10.80	10.65
North Dakota	10,059	27.0	26.5	20.3	18.4	7.44	6.91	9.82	9.50
Ohio	129,071	31.3	31.0	26.3	25.6	7.51	7.49	10.31	10.51
Oklahoma	47,393	32.1	32.1	23.9	24.5	8.39	8.64	11.16	11.49
Oregon	39,792	28.8	28.0	25.0	23.4	6.13	6.21	8.19	8.29
Pennsylvania	130,562	30.6	30.2	25.4	25.2	7.02	7.13	9.57	9.94
Rhode Island	10,102	33.4	32.0	29.2	27.7	6.63	7.20	9.06	9.54
South Carolina	55,693	33.5	33.2	27.4	26.9	8.59	8.09	11.81	11.47
South Dakota	10,952	24.7	24.5	19.7	19.1	7.19	7.24	9.42	9.55
Tennessee	78,659	32.1	31.8	25.9	25.5	7.92	8.19	10.93	11.19
Texas	365,857	34.7	34.8	28.2	28.4	7.89	8.06	10.78	11.03
Utah	45,702	23.1	23.1	19.4	18.7	7.01	7.47	9.28	9.74
Vermont	5,117	26.9	25.8	22.7	20.8	5.65	6.14	7.63	8.44
Virginia	94,391	32.6	31.9	26.8	26.2	6.88	7.12	9.58	9.88
Washington	83,067	28.5	27.8	24.0	22.8	6.32	6.36	8.64	8.47
West Virginia	17,159	34.2	34.6	26.9	26.3	8.96	9.39	12.00	12.58
Wisconsin	60,491	26.7	26.7	21.7	21.6	7.38	7.37	9.94	10.07
Wyoming	6,118	26.4	26.3	18.1	20.7	7.42	7.46	10.05	9.87

See footnotes at end of table.

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Table 4. Total number of births, by state of residence, provisional 2020, and percentage of cesarean delivery and preterm births, by state of residence: United States, each state and territory, final 2019 and provisional 2020—Con.

[By place of residence. Data were based on a continuous file of records received from the states]

Area	Total number of births, 2020	Total cesarean		Low-risk cesarean ¹		Late preterm ²		Preterm ³	
		2020	2019	2020	2019	2020	2019	2020	2019
		Percent							
Puerto Rico	18,228	48.2	47.0	45.9	42.2	8.52	8.85	11.59	11.78
U.S. Virgin Islands	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
Guam	---	---	23.0	---	20.6	---	9.16	---	11.51
American Samoa	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
Northern Marianas	538	30.5	26.8	19.9	18.2	7.62	6.60	10.04	8.65

--- Data not available.

¹Low-risk cesarean was defined as singleton, term (37 or more weeks of gestation based on obstetric estimate), vertex (not breech) cesarean deliveries to women having a first birth per 100 women delivering singleton, term, vertex first births.

²Births at 34–36 completed weeks of gestation based on the obstetric estimate.

³Births before 37 completed weeks of gestation based on the obstetric estimate.

⁴Excludes data for the territories.

SOURCE: National Center for Health Statistics, National Vital Statistics System, Natality.

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