

The preterm birth rate in North Carolina was **10.7%** in 2023, the same as the rate in 2022

**PRETERM  
BIRTH  
GRADE**

**D+**

**US RATE**



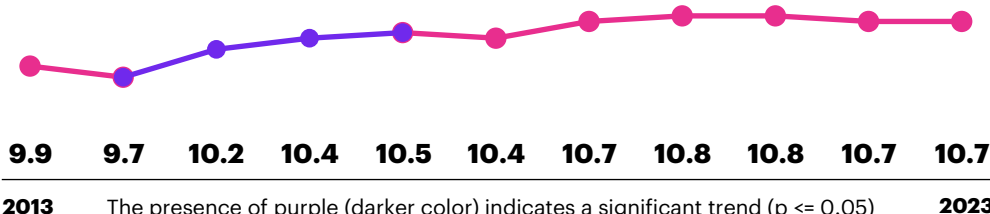
**NC RATE**



**NC RANK**

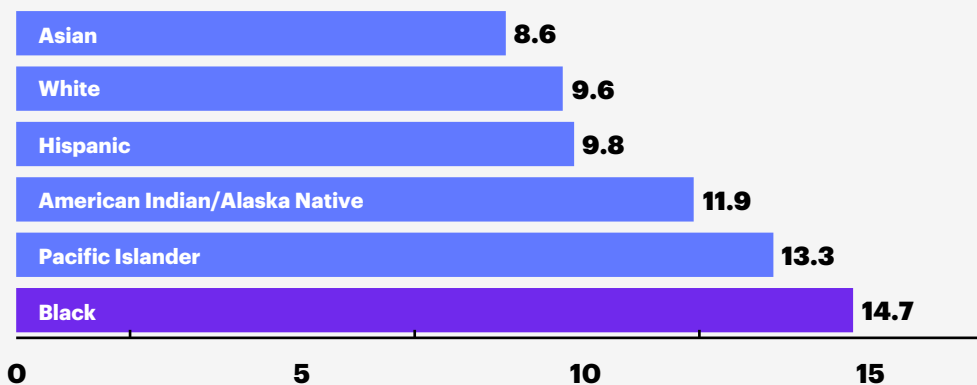


Percentage of live births born preterm



The preterm birth rate among babies born to Black birthing people is **1.4x higher** than the rate among all other babies

Preterm birth rate by race/ethnicity, 2021-2023



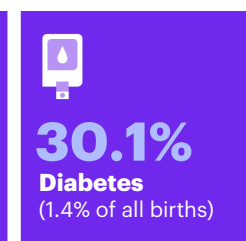
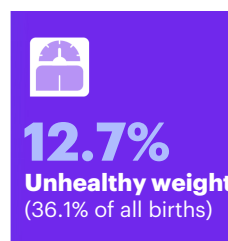
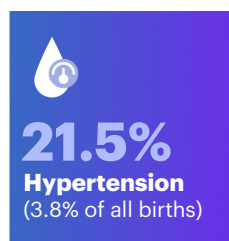
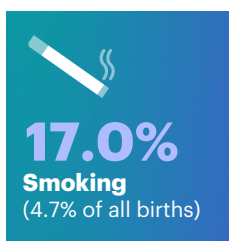
**DISPARITY  
RATIO** **1.34**

This data is intended to highlight disparities in outcomes related to race/ethnicity and should serve as a starting point for discussions about addressing systemic racism and inequality.

**Note:** The disparity ratio is a summary measure of the gap between the racial/ethnic group with the lowest rate of preterm birth compared to all others. A value closer to 1 is most desirable, with 1 indicating no disparity. The United States preterm birth disparity ratio is 1.29.

**Chronic health conditions make people more likely to have a preterm birth**

The tiles display the 2023 preterm birth rate for babies born to birthing people with each chronic condition (in blue) and percentage of all births exposed to each condition (in parentheses).



**Note:** More than one condition can occur at the same time. All conditions occur prior to pregnancy. US preterm birth rates for birthing people with each condition are as follows: smoking: 15.5%; hypertension: 23.3%; unhealthy weight: 12.3%; and diabetes: 28.8%.

**Source:** National Center for Health Statistics, Natality data, 2013-2023.

The infant mortality rate decreased in the last decade; In 2022, 825 babies died before their first birthday

INFANT MORTALITY RATE

6.8

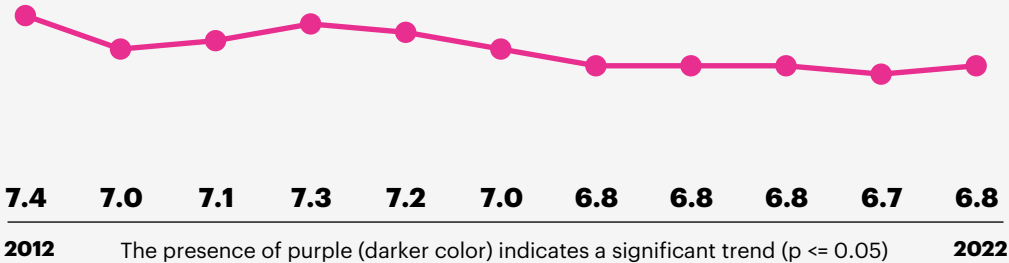
US RATE



NC RANK



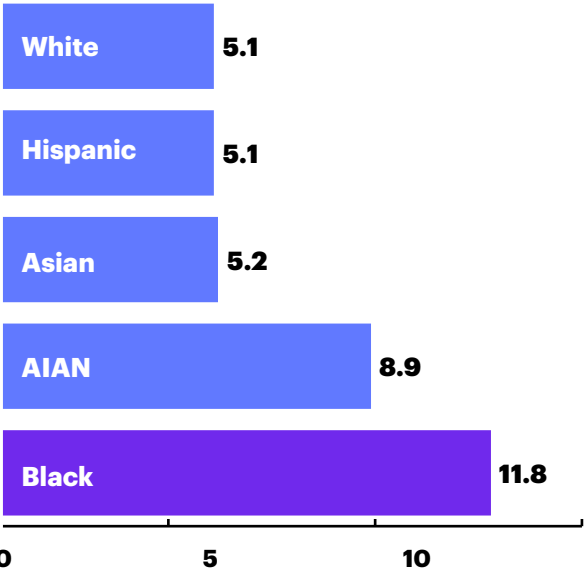
Rate per 1,000 live births



The infant mortality rate among babies born to Black birthing people is 1.7x the state rate

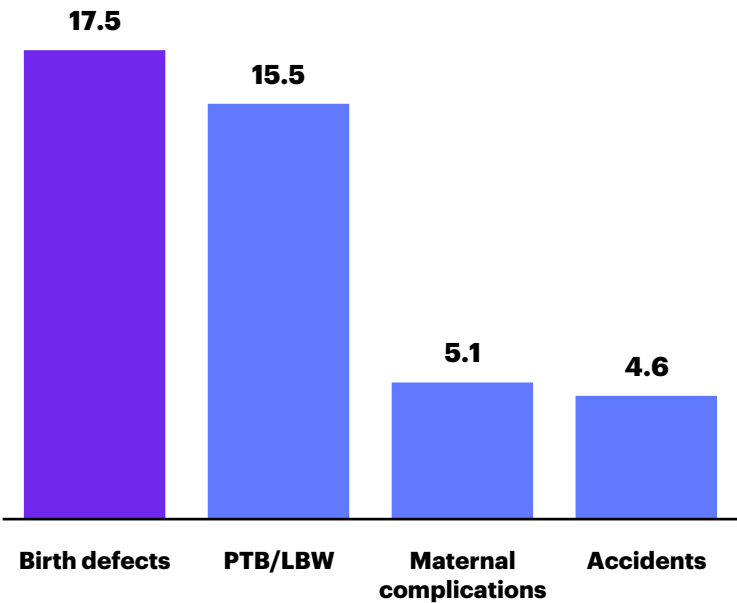
Infant mortality rate

Rate per 1,000 live births by maternal race/ethnicity, 2020-2022



Leading causes of infant death

Percent of total deaths by underlying cause, 2020-2022

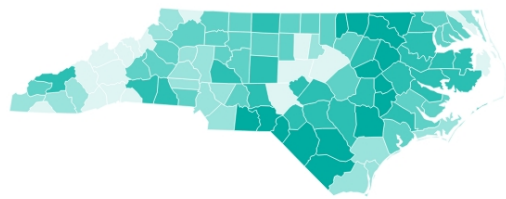


Notes: PI = Pacific Islander; AIAN = American Indian/Alaska Native; PTB/LBW = preterm birth and low birth weight; SIDS = sudden infant death syndrome. Other causes account for 57.3% of infant deaths.  
Source: National Center for Health Statistics, Period Linked Birth/Infant Death data, 2012-2022.

# NORTH CAROLINA

## Maternal Vulnerability Index by county

The Maternal Vulnerability Index is used to understand **where and why** birthing people may be more likely to have poor health outcomes



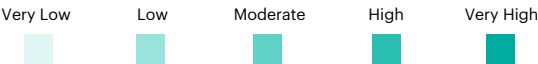
Birthing people in North Carolina are most vulnerable to poor outcomes due to the following factors:



General healthcare



Socioeconomic determinants



Source: Surgo Health, Maternal Vulnerability Index (MVI), 2024.  
<https://mvi.surgoventures.org/>

## Exposure to **extreme heat or air pollution** can increase the risk of poor maternal and infant health outcomes, including preterm birth

Community and individual risk mitigation efforts can help reduce the risk of exposure to extreme heat and poor air quality.

Birthing people can check their local heat risk and air quality at:  
<http://www.cdc.gov/heatrisk>

**30**  
DAYS



### EXTREME HEAT

This shows the average number of days in the year that birthing people were at risk for exposure to extreme heat.

**2**  
DAYS



### POOR AIR QUALITY

This shows the average number of days in the year that birthing people were at risk for exposure to poor air quality.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention National Environmental Public Health Tracking Network, Historical Temperature and Heat Index, 2023; Environmental Protection Agency, Air Quality Statistics by County, 2023. See technical notes for more details.

## The measures below are important indicators for how North Carolina is supporting the health of birthing people

**26.7**

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.

**24.9**

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.

**18.0**

PERCENT



### INADEQUATE PRENATAL CARE

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

Source: National Center for Health Statistics, Mortality data, 2018-2022. National Center for Health Statistics, Natality data, 2023.

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



MIDWIFE POLICY

State has adopted 1 of 4 supportive midwifery policies.

State has adopted policies that support the growth and sustainability of the midwifery workforce.



INDEPENDENT PRACTICE



PAY PARITY



PRESCRIPTIVE AUTHORITY



LICENSURE FOR CERTIFIED MIDWIVES



MEDICAID EXTENSION

State has extended coverage for women to one year postpartum.



MEDICAID EXPANSION

State has adopted this policy, which allows greater access to preventative care.



MENTAL HEALTH

State Medicaid program requires and reimburses for postpartum mental health screening at well-child visits.



DOULA REIMBURSEMENT

State Medicaid agency is actively reimbursing doula care.



PAID FAMILY LEAVE

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



COMMITMENT TO PREVENTION

State has a CDC funded maternal mortality review committee and reviews fetal and infant deaths.

Legend State has the indicated funding/policy State reimburses up to \$1,500 State does not have the indicated policy/funding

This table is a summary of report card measures.

Refer to each individual section for more info on each measure.

	Preterm birth	Preterm disparity ratio	Infant mortality	Maternal mortality	Low-risk Cesarean	Adequate PNC
Measure	10.7%	1.34	6.8 deaths per 1K births	26.7 deaths per 100K births	24.9%	77.5%
Rank	32nd of 52	39th of 47	40th of 52	25th of 40	21st of 52	30th of 52
Direction from prior year	No change	No change	Improved	Worsened	Worsened	Improved
HP2030 Target	9.4%	1.00	5.0 deaths per 1k births	15.7 deaths per 100K births	23.6%	80.5%

Note: All policies were assessed on October 15, 2024. Adequate PNC measure differs from inadequate PNC. Adequate is presented here to align with Healthy People 2030 target. Ranks are determined for all states with available data with 1 being the best.