



Births: Provisional Data for 2019

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Abstract

Objectives—This report presents provisional 2019 data on U.S. births. Births are shown by age and race and Hispanic origin of mother. Data on cesarean delivery and preterm births are also presented.

Methods—Data are based on 99.96% of 2019 births. Records for states with less than 100% of records received are weighted to independent control counts of all births received in state vital statistics offices in 2019. Comparisons are made with final 2018 data and earlier years.

Results—The provisional number of births for the United States in 2019 was 3,745,540, down 1% from 2018. The general fertility rate was 58.2 births per 1,000 women aged 15–44, down 2% from 2018 to reach another record low for the United States. The total fertility rate was 1,705.0 births per 1,000 women in 2019, down 1% from 2018 to reach another record low for the nation. Birth rates declined for nearly all age groups of women under 35, but rose for women in their early 40s. The rate for women aged 35–39 was essentially unchanged in 2019. The birth rate for teenagers aged 15–19 declined by 5% in 2019 to 16.6 births per 1,000 females; rates declined for both younger (aged 15–17) and older (aged 18–19) teenagers. The cesarean delivery rate decreased to 31.7% in 2019; the low-risk cesarean delivery rate decreased to 25.6%. The preterm birth rate rose for the fifth year in a row to 10.23% in 2019.

Keywords: birth rates • maternal and infant health • vital statistics

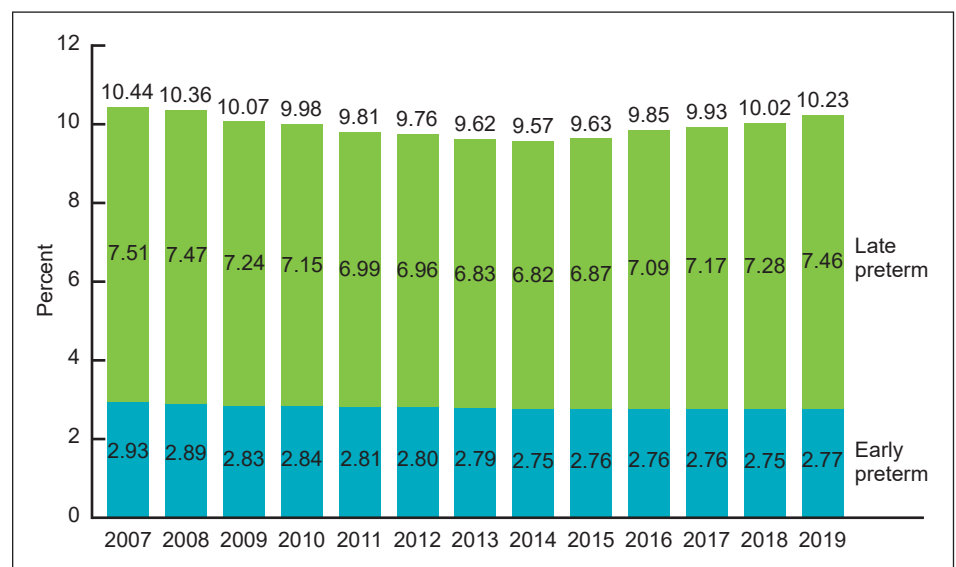
Introduction

This report from the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) is part of the National Vital Statistics System Rapid Release, Quarterly Provisional Estimates data series. 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. The series also includes reports that provide additional information on specific topics to help readers understand and interpret provisional natality and mortality data.

Using provisional birth data for the 12 months of 2019 (1), this report supplements the Quarterly Provisional Estimates for 2019 by presenting longer temporal trends in context and more detail (by race and Hispanic origin of the mother and by state of residence) than is shown in the quarterly estimates. Statistics from previous provisional reports have been shown to track well 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 (Figure 1) for the United States in 2019. Information on prenatal care and low birthweight, presented in previous provisional birth reports, are not shown in this report, but will be presented in final birth data for 2019.

Figure 1. Total, late, and early preterm birth rates: United States, final 2007–2018 and provisional 2019



NOTES: Gestational age is based on the obstetric estimate of gestation. Preterm is less than 37 completed weeks, late preterm is 34–36 completed weeks, and early preterm is less than 34 completed weeks of gestation. SOURCE: NCHS, National Vital Statistics System, Natality.

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 2019 as of February 13, 2020; these records represent nearly 100% (99.96%) of registered births occurring in 2019. Comparisons in this report are based on the final data for 2018 and earlier years (3). Data for American Samoa and the U.S. Virgin Islands were not available as of the release of the 2019 provisional birth file. Detailed information on reporting completeness and criteria may be found elsewhere (2,4,5).

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 non-Hispanic white or non-Hispanic black women omit the term “single-race” (3).

U.S. national birth and fertility rates for 2019 are based on population estimates derived from the 2010 census as of July 1, 2019 (7). Population estimates by age, sex, and race and Hispanic origin for 2019 were not available as of the preparation of this report. Accordingly, national birth and fertility rates by race and Hispanic origin, and fertility rates by state, are not shown in this report.

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 on

the reliability of provisional natality data, see “Births: Provisional Data for 2016” (8). For detailed information on items presented in this report, see “User Guide to the 2018 Natality Public Use File” (4).

Results

Births and birth rates

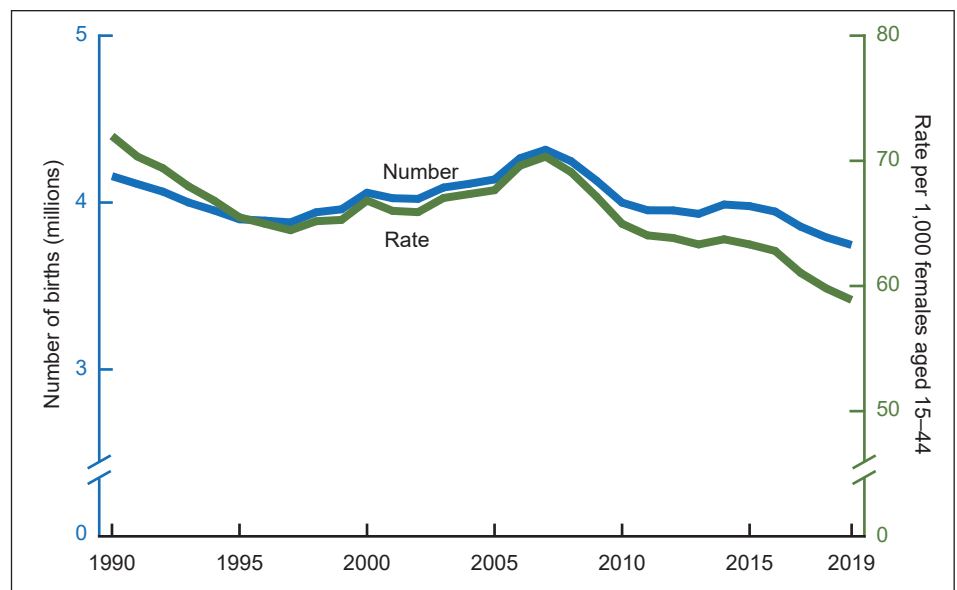
Key findings, illustrated in Tables 1 and 2 and Figures 2 and 3, are listed below:

- The provisional **number of births** for the United States in 2019 was 3,745,540, down 1% from the number in 2018 (3,791,712) (Tables 1 and 2 and Figure 2). This is the fifth year that the number of births has declined after the increase in 2014, down an average of 1% per year, and the lowest number of births since 1985 (3,9,10).
- Among the three largest race and Hispanic-origin groups, the number of births declined 1% for non-Hispanic black and non-Hispanic Asian women and 2% for non-Hispanic white and non-Hispanic AIAN women from 2018 to 2019 (Table 2). The number of births rose 3% for non-Hispanic

NHOPI women, but was essentially unchanged for Hispanic women from 2018 to 2019.

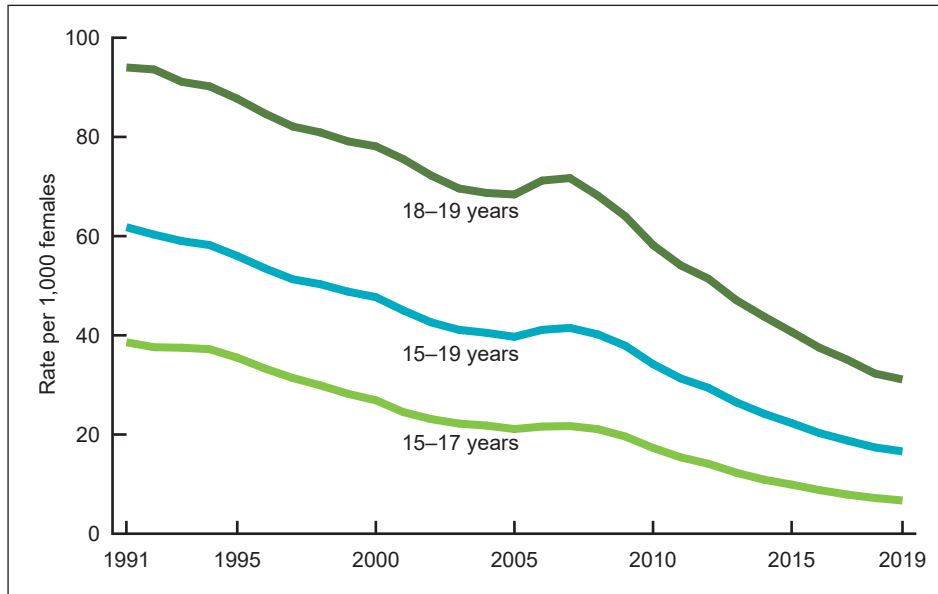
- The provisional **general fertility rate** (GFR) for the United States in 2019 was 58.2 births per 1,000 females aged 15–44, down 2% from the rate in 2018 (59.1), another record low for the nation (Table 1 and Figure 2) (3,9,10). From 2014 to 2019, the GFR declined by an average of 2% per year.
- The provisional **total fertility rate** (TFR) for the United States in 2019 was 1,705.0 births per 1,000 women, down 1% from the rate in 2018 (1,729.5), 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 2019 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 consistently below replacement since 2007 (3,9,10).

Figure 2. Number of live births and general fertility rates: United States, final 1990–2018 and provisional 2019



SOURCE: NCHS, National Vital Statistics System, Natality.

Figure 3. Birth rates for teenagers, by age of mother: United States, final 1991–2018 and provisional 2019



SOURCE: NCHS, National Vital Statistics System, Natality.

Maternal age

- Provisional birth rates declined for women aged 15–34 from 2018 to 2019, were essentially unchanged for women aged 35–39, and rose for women aged 40–44 (Table 1).
- The **birth rate for teenagers** in 2019 was 16.6 births per 1,000 females aged 15–19, down 5% from 2018 (17.4), reaching another record low for this age group (Table 1 and Figure 3) (3,9–11). The rate has declined by 60% since 2007 (41.5), the most recent period of continued decline, and 73% since 1991, the most recent peak. The rate had declined an average of 8% annually from 2007 to 2018 (3,9). The number of births to females aged 15–19 was 171,553 in 2019 (Table 1), down 5% from 2018 (3,9–11).
- The birth rates for teenagers aged 15–17 and 18–19 in 2019 were 6.7 and 31.1 births per 1,000 females, respectively, down by 7% and 4% from 2018, again reaching record lows for both groups (3,9–11). From 2007 to 2018, the rates for teenagers aged 15–17 and 18–19 declined by 10% and 7% per year, respectively (3,9).

- The birth rate for females aged 10–14 was 0.2 births per 1,000 in 2019, unchanged since 2015.
- The **birth rate for women aged 20–24** in 2019 was 66.6 births per 1,000 women, down 2% from 2018 (68.0), reaching yet another record low for this age group (Table 1) (3,9,10). This rate has declined by 37% since 2007. The number of births to women in their early 20s fell by 3% from 2018 to 2019 (Table 1).
- The **birth rate for women aged 25–29** was 93.7 births per 1,000 women, down 2% from 2018 (95.3), reaching another record low for this age group (3,9,10). The number of births to women in their late 20s declined 2% from 2018 to 2019.
- The **birth rate for women aged 30–34** in 2018 was 98.3 births per 1,000 women, down 1% from 2018 (99.7) (Table 1) (3,9,10). The number of births to women in their early 30s was essentially unchanged from 2018 to 2019.
- The **birth rate for women aged 35–39** was 52.7 births per 1,000 women, similar to the 2018 rate of 52.6. The number of births to women in their late 30s increased by 1% from 2018 to 2019.

- The **birth rate for women aged 40–44** in 2019 was 12.0 births per 1,000 women, up 2% from 2018 (11.8). The rate for this age group has risen almost continuously since 1985 by an average of 3% per year (3,9). The number of births to these women increased by 2% from 2018 to 2019.
- The **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. The number of births to women in this age group was also essentially unchanged from 2018 to 2019 (Table 1).

Maternal and infant health characteristics

Key findings, illustrated in Tables 2–3 and Figure 1, are listed below.

Cesarean delivery

- In 2019, the overall **cesarean delivery rate** decreased to 31.7% (from 31.9% in 2018) (Tables 2 and 3); the rate has generally declined since 2009 (32.9%) (3). See Table 3 for state-specific rates.
- Among the race and Hispanic-origin groups in 2019, the cesarean delivery rate ranged from 28.9% of births for non-Hispanic AIAN women to 35.9% for non-Hispanic black women (see Table 2). From 2018 to 2019, cesarean delivery decreased for non-Hispanic white (30.8% to 30.7%), non-Hispanic black (36.1% to 35.9%), non-Hispanic Asian (33.0% to 32.7%), and Hispanic (31.6% to 31.3%) women; changes in rates for non-Hispanic AIAN (28.7% to 28.9%) and non-Hispanic NHOPI women (31.1% to 30.3%) 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 decreased to 25.6% of births in 2019 from 25.9% in 2018 (Table 2).

- Low-risk cesarean rates ranged from 22.9% for non-Hispanic AIAN women to 30.0% for non-Hispanic black women (Table 2). Low-risk cesarean rates decreased from 2018 to 2019 for non-Hispanic white (24.9% to 24.7%), non-Hispanic black (30.3% to 30.0%), and Hispanic (25.4% to 24.8%) women.

Preterm birth

- The **preterm birth rate** rose for the fifth year in a row to 10.23% in 2019, from 10.02% in 2018, an increase of 2% and the highest level reported in more than a decade (3) (Figure 1, Table 2). 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) to 2014, but has risen 7% from 2014 (9.57%) to 2019 (3). See Table 3 for state-specific rates.
- The rise in the overall preterm rate from 2018 to 2019 was primarily due to the increase in **late preterm births** (34–36 completed weeks of gestation) (Table 3), from 7.28% to 7.46%. The percentage of infants born early preterm (less than 34 weeks) rose slightly, from 2.75% to 2.77%. Although higher than the rate for 2018, the 2019 early preterm birth rate was still lower than rates for 2007 through 2013 (2.93% to 2.79%) (Figure 1).
- Preterm rates increased 2% among births to each of the largest race and Hispanic-origin groups from 2018 to 2019: non-Hispanic white (9.09% to 9.26%), non-Hispanic black (14.13% to 14.38%), and Hispanic (9.73% to 9.97%). Although late preterm birth rates rose for all three groups by a similar magnitude, the early preterm birth rate increased only for births to Hispanic women (2.56% to 2.61%); nonsignificant increases were observed for births to non-Hispanic white (2.26% to 2.27%) and non-Hispanic black women (4.90% to 4.93%).

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Table 1. Births and birth rates, by age of mother: United States, final 2018 and provisional 2019

[Data for 2019 are based on a continuous file of records received from the states. Figures for 2019 are based on weighted data rounded to the nearest individual, so categories may not add to totals. Rates are per 1,000 women in specified age group. Rates for all ages are the total number of births (regardless of the age of the mother) per 1,000 women aged 15–44]

Age of mother (years)	2019		2018	
	Number	Rate	Number	Rate
All ages	3,745,540	58.2	3,791,712	59.1
10–14	1,783	0.2	1,736	0.2
15–19	171,553	16.6	179,871	17.4
15–17	41,040	6.7	44,291	7.2
18–19	130,513	31.1	135,580	32.3
20–24	703,888	66.6	726,175	68.0
25–29	1,077,516	93.7	1,099,491	95.3
30–34	1,088,829	98.3	1,090,697	99.7
35–39	572,300	52.7	566,786	52.6
40–44	120,070	12.0	117,381	11.8
45–54 ¹	9,600	0.9	9,575	0.9

¹The birth rate for women in this age group is 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 are to women aged 45–49.

NOTE: For information on the relative standard errors of the data and further discussion, see Reference 8.

SOURCE: NCHS, National Vital Statistics System, Natality.

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Table 2. Total number of births and percentage of cesarean delivery and preterm births, by race and Hispanic origin of mother: United States, final 2018 and provisional 2019

[Data for 2019 are based on a continuous file of records received from the states. Figures for 2019 are based on weighted data rounded to the nearest individual]

Characteristic	All races and origins ¹	Non-Hispanic, single race					
		White ²	Black ²	American Indian or Alaska Native ²	Asian ²	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander ²	Hispanic ³
Number of births							
2019	3,745,540	1,914,141	547,543	28,382	238,555	9,762	885,899
2018	3,791,712	1,956,413	552,029	29,092	240,798	9,476	886,210
Cesarean delivery							
				Percent			
Total⁴:							
2019	31.7	30.7	35.9	28.9	32.7	30.3	31.3
2018	31.9	30.8	36.1	28.7	33.0	31.1	31.6
Low-risk⁵:							
2019	25.6	24.7	30.0	22.9	27.4	26.2	24.8
2018	25.9	24.9	30.3	22.3	27.6	26.5	25.4
Gestational age⁶							
Preterm (under 37 weeks):							
2019	10.23	9.26	14.38	11.57	8.72	11.13	9.97
2018	10.02	9.09	14.13	11.52	8.57	11.79	9.73
Late preterm (34–36 weeks):							
2019	7.46	6.99	9.45	8.67	6.58	8.24	7.36
2018	7.28	6.83	9.23	8.35	6.46	8.20	7.17
Early preterm (under 34 weeks):							
2019	2.77	2.27	4.93	2.90	2.13	2.89	2.61
2018	2.75	2.26	4.90	3.17	2.11	3.59	2.56

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. Race categories are consistent with the 1997 Office of Management and Budget (OMB) 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 is 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.

NOTE: For information on the relative standard errors of the data and further discussion, see Reference 8.
 SOURCE: NCHS, National Vital Statistics System, Natality.

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Table 3. Total number of births, by state of residence, provisional 2019, and percentage of cesarean delivery and preterm births, by state of residence: United States, each state and territory, final 2018 and provisional 2019

[By place of residence. Data are based on a continuous file of records received from the states. Figures are based on weighted data rounded to the nearest individual, so categories may not add to totals]

Area	Total number of births, 2019	Total cesarean		Low-risk cesarean ¹		Late preterm ²		Preterm ³	
		2019	2018	2019	2018	2019	2018	2019	2018
		Number		Percent					
United States ⁴	3,745,540	31.7	31.9	25.6	25.9	7.46	7.28	10.23	10.02
Alabama	58,604	34.6	34.7	28.4	28.6	8.99	8.86	12.48	12.48
Alaska	9,811	21.7	22.4	17.1	16.7	7.40	6.91	9.72	9.26
Arizona	79,358	27.8	27.5	21.9	21.3	6.99	7.08	9.37	9.52
Arkansas	36,566	34.5	34.8	27.7	28.4	8.72	8.50	11.91	11.62
California	446,061	30.8	30.9	23.8	24.0	6.62	6.49	8.96	8.79
Colorado	62,956	26.8	26.1	21.4	21.2	7.13	6.75	9.55	9.22
Connecticut	34,258	34.7	34.8	28.9	29.4	6.71	6.76	9.33	9.36
Delaware	10,558	31.5	31.3	24.4	24.1	7.40	6.80	10.68	9.56
District of Columbia	9,071	31.9	31.5	28.0	28.0	7.32	6.72	10.41	10.10
Florida	219,982	36.5	36.8	29.6	30.4	7.61	7.34	10.62	10.25
Georgia	126,341	34.3	34.0	28.2	27.9	8.35	8.06	11.69	11.50
Hawaii	16,787	26.8	26.9	23.1	22.4	7.75	7.58	10.58	10.28
Idaho	22,064	24.0	24.0	19.0	18.5	6.69	6.87	8.77	9.03
Illinois	140,099	30.6	31.2	24.7	25.2	7.87	7.71	10.70	10.67
Indiana	80,819	29.3	29.8	23.0	23.5	7.44	7.47	10.16	10.23
Iowa	37,643	29.6	29.8	23.7	23.4	6.89	7.29	9.49	9.91
Kansas	35,383	29.7	29.7	24.3	24.2	7.42	6.95	10.10	9.49
Kentucky	52,981	33.7	34.3	26.8	27.8	8.37	8.35	11.29	11.33
Louisiana	58,799	36.6	37.0	28.5	29.3	9.59	9.36	13.11	12.99
Maine	11,780	30.3	30.4	25.3	25.0	6.69	6.40	9.03	8.56
Maryland	70,172	33.0	33.9	27.6	28.2	7.32	7.10	10.28	10.18
Massachusetts	69,157	31.4	31.5	24.8	25.4	6.62	6.50	8.97	8.94
Michigan	107,558	32.1	32.1	26.6	27.3	7.35	7.33	10.29	10.04
Minnesota	65,997	27.6	27.0	23.8	22.9	6.85	6.62	9.26	8.92
Mississippi	36,630	38.5	38.3	30.7	31.2	10.35	10.09	14.58	14.25
Missouri	72,026	30.1	30.0	23.9	23.9	7.93	7.89	10.86	10.72
Montana	11,077	28.5	28.1	23.2	22.7	7.59	6.87	9.61	9.10
Nebraska	24,695	29.1	29.9	21.2	22.5	7.83	7.84	10.48	10.45
Nevada	35,065	32.8	33.8	26.8	28.0	7.88	7.44	10.68	10.14
New Hampshire	11,836	31.6	31.6	26.0	27.0	6.51	6.00	8.19	8.30
New Jersey	99,549	33.8	34.9	26.7	27.8	6.96	6.88	9.48	9.50
New Mexico	22,920	26.5	25.3	21.3	19.6	7.16	7.27	10.06	9.79
New York	221,532	33.2	33.9	28.1	28.9	6.62	6.41	9.18	8.98
North Carolina	118,696	29.1	29.4	22.5	23.3	7.60	7.37	10.66	10.38
North Dakota	10,454	26.5	26.5	18.4	19.3	6.91	7.11	9.50	9.57
Ohio	134,379	31.0	30.8	25.6	25.4	7.49	7.37	10.51	10.25
Oklahoma	49,138	32.1	32.8	24.5	24.6	8.64	8.42	11.50	11.39
Oregon	41,834	28.0	28.0	23.4	23.8	6.21	5.91	8.30	7.83
Pennsylvania	134,174	30.2	30.1	25.2	25.1	7.13	6.81	9.94	9.54
Rhode Island	10,175	32.0	32.2	27.7	27.8	7.20	6.35	9.54	8.98
South Carolina	57,040	33.2	33.5	26.9	26.9	8.09	8.07	11.47	11.34
South Dakota	11,450	24.5	24.6	19.1	18.7	7.24	7.31	9.55	9.44
Tennessee	80,447	31.8	32.4	25.5	26.4	8.19	7.92	11.19	11.06
Texas	377,397	34.8	35.0	28.4	28.7	8.06	7.88	11.03	10.78
Utah	46,831	23.1	22.7	18.7	18.3	7.47	7.19	9.74	9.42
Vermont	5,359	25.7	25.9	20.8	20.3	6.11	6.38	8.40	8.51
Virginia	97,356	32.0	32.4	26.2	25.8	7.13	6.77	9.89	9.42
Washington	84,876	27.8	27.9	22.8	23.1	6.36	6.16	8.47	8.31
West Virginia	17,994	34.6	34.1	26.3	27.3	9.34	8.73	12.48	11.83
Wisconsin	63,242	26.7	26.6	21.6	22.3	7.37	7.31	10.08	9.91
Wyoming	6,564	26.3	27.4	20.7	20.4	7.47	7.45	9.87	9.85

See footnotes at end of table.

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Table 3. Total number of births, by state of residence, provisional 2019, and percentage of cesarean delivery and preterm births, by state of residence: United States, each state and territory, final 2018 and provisional 2019—Con.

[By place of residence. Data are based on a continuous file of records received from the states. Figures are based on weighted data rounded to the nearest individual, so categories may not add to totals]

Area	Total number of births, 2019	Total cesarean		Low-risk cesarean ¹		Late preterm ²		Preterm ³	
		2019	2018	2019	2018	2019	2018	2019	2018
	Number	Percent							
Puerto Rico	20,329	47.0	46.3	42.2	41.9	8.85	8.86	11.77	11.90
Virgin Islands	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
Guam	2,775	23.4	25.4	21.0	23.1	8.97	7.98	11.32	9.98
American Samoa	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
Northern Marianas	667	27.1	31.5	18.6	32.3	6.61	6.90	8.34	10.44

--- Data not available.

¹Low-risk cesarean is 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.

NOTE: For information on the relative standard errors of the data and further discussion, see Reference 8.

SOURCE: NCHS, National Vital Statistics System, Natality.

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