

The Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS) is a survey of women who recently gave birth that asks about their experiences and behaviors before, during and shortly after their pregnancy. Vermont has participated in PRAMS since 2001. This report presents highlights for 2015 Vermont births, organized by topic area. Further information is available upon request.

### **Tobacco Use and Smoking Cessation**

- 28% of women smoked in the 3 months prior to pregnancy.
- 16% smoked during the last trimester.
- 20% were smoking at the time of the survey.
- 86% of women who smoked cigarettes during the 3 months before pregnancy tried one or more smoking cessation strategies.
  - 70% tried to quit on their own.
  - 25% set a date by which to stop smoking.
  - Between 5% and 10% used a quit line or website; used a nicotine replacement product (like a patch, gum, or lozenge); or used booklets, videos or other materials.
  - Less than 5% attended a class or program, attended counseling, or used a pill to quit smoking.

### **Marijuana & Alcohol Use**

- 22% of women smoked marijuana in the year prior to pregnancy, a significantly higher percentage than among those who gave birth in 2014 (16%)
- 11% smoked marijuana during pregnancy, also a significant increase from 2014 births (6%).
- 69% drank at least some alcohol in the 3 months prior to pregnancy.
  - 20% of all women had at least one binge (4 or more drinks in one sitting) in the three months before pregnancy.
- 16% drank during the last 3 months of their pregnancy.
  - 28% of women age 35 or older drank alcohol during the last 3 months of pregnancy.
- 23% of women were **not** advised by a healthcare worker to abstain from alcohol during pregnancy. Within those age 35 or older, the age group most likely to drink during pregnancy, 28% were not advised to abstain from alcohol.
- There was no decrease in the prevalence of drinking during pregnancy, nor increase in the proportion of women advised not to drink during pregnancy, for 2015 births.

### **Work and Workplace Leave**

- 77% of all women worked during their pregnancies.
  - 73% of these had returned or planned to return to their jobs by the time of the survey.
  - 66% of Medicaid enrollees, and 88% of women who were covered by private insurance, worked during pregnancy.
  - 33% of women who worked during pregnancy were enrolled in Medicaid.
- 49% of women who had returned or were planning to return to work after pregnancy did not have paid leave.
  - 71% of working mothers on Medicaid did not have paid leave at their jobs, compared to 33% of those who were privately insured.
- About two-thirds (68%) of all women felt they had too little time off available to them after delivery.

### Preconception Health & Family Planning

- In the year before their most recent pregnancy, 26% of mothers were dieting to lose weight, and over half (55%) exercised 3 or more times per week.
- During a visit to a health care provider during the 12 months before getting pregnant:
  - 15% were checked for diabetes.
  - 22% were checked for high blood pressure.
  - 24% were checked for depression or anxiety.
- 48% were not taking a multivitamin during the month prior to pregnancy, while 39% took one every day. The remaining 13% took multivitamins, but not every day of the week.
  - Among women whose pregnancies were unplanned, 71% were not taking a vitamin.
- 40% of births resulted from unintended pregnancies.

### Services Needed during Pregnancy

- 47% felt they needed additional financial assistance, such as food stamps, WIC services, or money during pregnancy
- 33% of women who smoked during pregnancy needed help quitting smoking
- 15% needed assistance with family or other personal problems
- Around 2% needed assistance to reduce violence within the home. (Note: women under 20 were not asked this question, so this estimate may be low)
- 5% needed some other type of service, such as finding employment and affordable child care.

### Prenatal Care & Childbirth Preparation

- For 2015 births, 11% had a home visit from a health worker during pregnancy, a significantly higher proportion than for 2014 births (7%)
- 83% had a discussion with a healthcare worker about the signs of preterm labor
  - 21% of women who delivered a preterm birth did **not** have a conversation with a healthcare worker about the signs of preterm labor.
- 82% of women talked to a healthcare worker about how much weight to gain during pregnancy. Similar proportions talked about healthy foods to eat while pregnant (81%) and exercise during pregnancy (82%).
  - 33% discussed programs or resources for healthy weight gain during pregnancy.
- 91% discussed breastfeeding.
- 83% discussed what to do if she experienced depression during or after pregnancy.
- 55% discussed seatbelt use during pregnancy.
- 56% discussed physical abuse by partners.
- 56% of first-time mothers took a childbirth education class during pregnancy.
  - Only 35% of first-time mothers enrolled in Medicaid took childbirth classes.

## **Stress & Abuse**

- 72% of women experienced at least one major life stressor during the year before giving birth, with 27% experiencing at least 3 stressors, and 6% experiencing 6 or more.
  - 29% experienced an emotional stressor during the year before giving birth.
  - 54% had at least one major financial stressor.
    - 12% at some point did not have enough money to buy sufficient food.
  - 29% experienced partner-related stress.
    - 4% were physically abused by a spouse or partner.
  - 18% had a potentially traumatic stressor, including 4% experiencing homelessness.

## **Oral Health**

- 63% of women had their teeth cleaned in the year prior to their most recent pregnancy.
- 62% had their teeth cleaned during pregnancy.
- During pregnancy, 64% had a talk with a dentist or health care worker about how to care for her teeth and gums.
- 19% went to the dentist during pregnancy about a problem with their teeth and gums.
- 24% of women who had a problem with their teeth or gums during pregnancy thought they could not afford to go to the dentist.
  - 28% of Medicaid enrollees with a dental problem thought they could not afford to go to the dentist during pregnancy, despite the fact that all Vermont Medicaid enrollees are provided with dental coverage which does not require a co-pay.
  - There was no significant difference by insurance type in the percent of women with dental problems during pregnancy who thought they could not afford to go to the dentist.
- 28% of women enrolled in Medicaid who had a problem with their teeth or gums during pregnancy could not find a dentist who accepted Medicaid.
  - 15% of those enrolled in Medicaid were not aware\* that they had dental insurance through Medicaid.
- 16% did not think it was safe to go to the dentist during pregnancy.
- 12% could not find a dentist who took pregnant patients.

## **Postpartum Counseling**

- 93% talked with a healthcare worker about birth control methods and 59% reported discussing how long to wait before getting pregnant again.
- 91% had a discussion with a healthcare worker about postpartum depression.
- 53% received information on support groups for new parents.
- 39% had a discussion with a healthcare worker about getting to and staying at a healthy weight after delivery.

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\* Based on respondents who stated that they were Medicaid enrollees and also stated that they were not able to access dental care due to a lack of insurance. Since 2013, all Vermont Medicaid enrollees are provided with dental coverage which does not require a co-pay.

## **Breastfeeding**

- 91% of mothers initiated breastfeeding.
  - 83% breastfed at least 4 weeks, and 77% for at least 8 weeks.
- Each of the following breastfeeding-supportive hospital practices happened for at least 90% of breastfeeding mothers: staff provided breastfeeding information; baby and mother stayed in the same room; baby was breastfed in the hospital; staff told mother to nurse on demand.
- Each of the following breastfeeding-supportive hospital practices happened for between 80% and 89% of breastfeeding mothers: hospital staff helped mother learn to breastfeed; breastfeeding took place within the first hour after delivery; baby was fed only breast milk; the hospital provided a phone number for breastfeeding support; mother was not provided a gift pack with formula.
- 65% of babies who were breastfed at least once were not given a pacifier by hospital staff.
- 84% of women who delivered low birthweight babies were provided with a breast pump in the hospital.

## **Sleep Environment**

- 85% of mothers exclusively placed their infant to sleep on his or her back.
- 24% of infants always or often shared a bed, and 14% sometimes shared a bed.
- 62% of infants rarely or never shared a bed.
- There was no significant change in any sleep environment indicator for 2015 births.

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Questions or comments about this report, or requests for further data, may be sent to John Davy at [john.davy@vermont.gov](mailto:john.davy@vermont.gov) or (802) 863-7661. More information about Vermont PRAMS can also be found at the Vermont Department of Health's population health surveys and data page at <http://healthvermont.gov/PRAMS>.