

INFANT DEATHS, FETAL DEATHS, ABORTIONS AND PREGNANCIES

INFANT DEATHS

In 2005, there were 42 resident infant deaths for a rate of 6.5 infant deaths per 1,000 live births. This is the highest rate since 1998 for Vermont ([Table A-1](#)). The rate is above the *Healthy Vermonters 2010* goal of 4.5, and is higher than the 2005 U.S. white rate of 5.7. Comparisons are made to the U.S. white rate because all of the Vermont resident infant deaths were to whites in 2005. The Vermont infant mortality rate steadily declined from 24.0 in 1960 to 5.88 per 1,000 live births in 1991. Since 1991 the rate has fluctuated between a high of 7.4 in 1994 and a low of 4.2 in 2002.

Twenty six (62.0 percent) of the infant deaths occurred during the neonatal period, that is before the infant became 28 days old ([Table D-6](#)). The neonatal death rate was 4.0 deaths per 1,000 live births ([Table D-5](#)), higher than the 2005 U.S. white neonatal death rate of 3.8. The Vermont neonatal death rate has decreased over the past four decades from 18.6 in 1960, to 14.4 in 1970, to 6.2 in 1980, to 3.6 in 1990 ([Table A-1](#)). The rate increased through the nineties to a high of 5.9 in 1998 before sharply dropping to 3.2 in 1999. After increasing to 3.8 in 2000, the rate has fluctuated over the past few years.

The leading causes of infant deaths ([Table D-9](#)) were respiratory disorders (6), maternal complications (4), and birth defects (4).

One of the most important risk factors in infant mortality is low birth weight ([Table D-7](#)). Of resident infants who died in 2005, 54.8 percent had a birth weight less than 2500 grams (5 pounds 8 ounces), while 6.2 percent of all resident births were low weight. The infant mortality rate for low weight births was 57.5 deaths per 1,000 live births. Age of mother is also related to infant mortality ([Table D-5](#)), with the highest rates typically seen in the youngest and the oldest age groups. From 2003 to 2005, the infant mortality rate for mothers 15 through 19 years of age was 7.6, and for mothers age 40 through 44 the rate was 8.1. The 35 to 39 year old maternal age group had the highest neonatal death rate at 5.1.

FETAL DEATHS

Unlike births and deaths, reports of fetal deaths and abortions are not shared among states. Therefore, statistics concerning these events reflect occurrences in Vermont only and do not include Vermont resident fetal deaths and abortions that occurred in other states.

There were 26 resident fetal deaths in 2005 ([Table D-1](#)) for a rate of 4.0 per 1,000 live births and fetal deaths, up from 3.3 per 1,000 live births and fetal deaths in 2004 ([Table D-5](#)). Of the fetal deaths in Vermont, 20 weighed less than 2500 grams ([Table D-7](#)). From 2003 to 2005, the fetal death rates were highest in the youngest and older age groups: 7.6 per 1,000 live births for women age 15 to 19, and 5.0 for women age 35 to 39 ([Table D-5](#)).

VERMONT ABORTIONS

There were 1620 abortions performed in Vermont in 2005, a decrease following three years of consecutive increases. Vermont residents accounted for 1448, or 89.4 percent. This represents a rate of 11.4 per 1,000 women age 15 to 44.

The abortion ratio is the number of resident abortions occurring in Vermont times 1,000, divided by the total resident live births. The abortion ratio for 2005 was 223.6 abortions per 1,000 live births, a decrease from

227.4 in 2004, which was the highest ratio since 1998. The most recent U.S. white abortion ratio available was 161 per 1,000 live births, in 2004.

Women age 20 to 24 had the highest *age-specific* abortion rate, of 22.9 per 1,000 women, followed by women age 25 to 29 at 16.5. First trimester abortions accounted for 94.5 percent of all Vermont abortions and 69.1 percent of all Vermont abortions were for pregnancies of less than 9 weeks duration ([Table E-5](#)). See [Appendix B](#) for the method used to compute the number of weeks of gestation.

VERMONT RESIDENT PREGNANCIES

The pregnancy rate is derived by adding live births, fetal deaths and abortions. The pregnancy rates presented in this report underestimate the actual number of pregnancies for two reasons. First, Vermont resident abortions and fetal deaths that occur out of state are not reported to us. Second, by statute, fetal deaths prior to 20 weeks gestation are not reportable. Since residents of some counties may be more likely to use out-of-state services, the extent of these underestimates may differ among counties.

In 2005, the pregnancy rate in Vermont was 62.6 pregnancies per 1,000 women age 15 to 44 ([Table F-1](#)), a decrease from 63.8 in 2004 which was the highest rate since 1995. Overall, the pregnancy rate peaked at 127.6 in 1960, dropped steadily until 1995, and has remained fairly stable since then ([Table A-1](#)).

The 2005 teen pregnancy rate was 33.0 pregnancies per 1,000 women age 15 to 19 years ([Table F-1](#)). This is an insignificant decrease from 33.1 in 2004, but in general the teen pregnancy rate has been decreasing since 1991. In 2005, the highest pregnancy rate was seen in women 25 to 29 years of age at 116.0, followed by the 30 to 34 age group at 107.6. The lowest rate was for women age 35 to 44 at 27.2.