

INFANT DEATHS, FETAL DEATHS, ABORTIONS AND PREGNANCIES

INFANT DEATHS

In 2006, there were 36 resident infant deaths for a rate of 5.5 infant deaths per 1,000 live births. The rate is above the *Healthy Vermonters 2010* goal of 4.5, but slightly lower than the 2006 U.S. white rate of 5.6. Comparisons are made to the U.S. white rate because all of the Vermont resident infant deaths were to whites in 2006. The Vermont infant mortality rate steadily declined from 24.0 in 1960 to 5.8 per 1,000 live births in 1991. Over the past two decades the rate has fluctuated between a high of 7.4 in 1994 and a low of 4.2 in 2002. ([Table A-1](#))

Twenty (55.6 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 3.1 deaths per 1,000 live births ([Table D-5](#)), lower than the 2006 U.S. white neonatal death rate of 3.7. 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](#)). Following an increasing trend through the nineties to a high of 5.9 in 1998, the rate has fluctuated throughout this decade.

The leading causes of infant deaths ([Table D-9](#)) were congenital anomalies (8), immaturity (6), and complications of placenta, cord, and membranes (4).

One of the most important risk factors in infant mortality is low birth weight ([Table D-7](#)). Of resident infants who died in 2006, 75.0 percent had a birth weight less than 2500 grams (5 pounds 8 ounces), while 6.8 percent of all resident births were low weight. The infant mortality rate for low weight births was 60.5 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 2004 to 2006, the infant mortality rate for mothers 15 through 19 years of age was 15.0, and for mothers age 40 through 44 the rate was 22.4. The 15 to 19 year old maternal age group had the highest neonatal death rate at 10.7.

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 30 resident fetal deaths in 2006 ([Table D-1](#)) for a rate of 4.6 per 1,000 live births and fetal deaths, up from 4.0 per 1,000 live births and fetal deaths in 2005 ([Table D-5](#)). Of the fetal deaths in Vermont, 21 weighed less than 2500 grams ([Table D-7](#)). From 2004 to 2006, the fetal death rates were highest in the youngest age groups: 6.4 for women age 15 to 19, and 6.9 per 1,000 live births for women age 20 to 24 ([Table D-5](#)).

VERMONT ABORTIONS

There were 1611 abortions performed in Vermont in 2006, a second consecutive decrease following three years of consecutive increases. Vermont residents accounted for 1456, or 90.0 percent. This represents a rate of 11.6 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 2006 was 223.7 abortions per 1,000 live births, one tenth higher than the 2005 rate. The U.S. white abortion ratio was 162 per 1,000 live births in 2006

Women age 20 to 24 had the highest *age-specific* abortion rate, of 26.1 per 1,000 women, followed by women age 25 to 29 at 16.7. First trimester abortions accounted for 93.9 percent of all Vermont abortions and 67.2 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 2006, the pregnancy rate in Vermont was 63.9 pregnancies per 1,000 women age 15 to 44 ([Table F-1](#)), an increase from 62.6 in 2005. Overall, the pregnancy rate peaked at 127.6 in 1960 then dropped steadily through the next four decades to a low of 60.3 in 2002 and has increased slightly over the past few years. ([Table A-1](#)).

The 2006 teen pregnancy rate was 32.8 pregnancies per 1,000 women age 15 to 19 years ([Table F-1](#)), a decrease from 33.0 in 2005. In general the teen pregnancy rate has been decreasing since 1991. In 2006, the highest pregnancy rate was seen in women 25 to 29 years of age at 116.4, followed by the 30 to 34 age group at 103.8. The lowest rate was for women age 35 to 44 at 29.4