

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 2017 Vermont births, organized by topic area. Further information is available upon request.

Tobacco Use, E-Cigarettes and Smoking Cessation

- 22% of women smoked cigarettes in the 3 months prior to pregnancy.
 - 86% of women who had a health care visit in the 12 months before pregnancy were asked if they smoke cigarettes.
- 12% smoked cigarettes during the last trimester, meaning that 45% of those who were smoking before pregnancy quit before the last three months.
- 14% smoked cigarettes at the time of the survey.
- 8% of women reported using e-cigarettes at any time in the previous two years.
 - 3% of all moms used e-cigarettes in the three months before pregnancy.
 - 1% of all moms used e-cigarettes in the last three months of pregnancy.
- 79% of all smokers used at least one strategy to quit smoking. The most popular strategies were:
 - Tried to do it on their own (e.g. cold turkey): 72%
 - Set a specific date to quit smoking: 34%
 - Use a nicotine patch, gum, lozenge, spray or inhaler: 18%
 - About 10% to 15% used each of the following in an attempt to quit: switched to e-cigarettes; used booklets or videos; used the internet; called a quit line like 802Quits or visited a national or state website.
 - About 5% attended a class or program.
 - Some smokers (too few to provide an estimate) reported that they: went to counseling; used a pill like Zyban®; used a texting program; used a cessation application (“app”).
 - Other approaches not listed were used by 7% of smokers.
- 74% of smokers had a doctor, nurse, or other health care worker advise them to quit smoking. Actions and recommendations on the part of health care workers included:
 - 46% of smokers discussed with a health care worker how to quit smoking.
 - At a prenatal visit, about one-third to one-half of all smokers had a health care worker : refer them to a quit line such as 802Quits; provide them with booklets, videos or other materials to help them quit smoking on their own; suggest that they attend a class or program to stop smoking; ask if a family member or friend would support their decision to quit; suggest that they set a specific date by which to stop smoking.
 - About one-quarter of all smokers had a health care worker recommend a nicotine patch or nicotine gum, and 11% were referred to counseling to help with quitting.
 - Some smokers, but too few to provide an estimate, reported that they were prescribed a nicotine nasal spray or inhaler, were prescribed a pill like Zyban® or were prescribed a pill like Chantix®.

Alcohol Use

- 68% of women drank alcohol during the three months before pregnancy.
- 18% had at least one drinking binge (four or more drinks during a two-hour span) during the three months before pregnancy.
- 15% drank alcohol during pregnancy.
 - 97% of all women with a prenatal care visit were asked about their alcohol use.

“During the weeks leading up to my pregnancy or when I found out, we had stopped ‘trying’ to get pregnant. ... At the time I was smoking cigarettes and drinking a lot and had a lot of [stress].”

Other Substance Use

- 19% of women used a substance other than tobacco or alcohol during the month before pregnancy*.
 - The most commonly used substance was marijuana (16%).
 - 4% used prescription pain relievers.
 - 2% used Adderall®, Ritalin® or other stimulants.
 - Heroin use, cocaine use, synthetic marijuana use and amphetamine use were also reported, but there were too few respondents to each to provide an estimate.
- 11% used a substance other than alcohol or tobacco during pregnancy.
 - Marijuana was the most commonly used substance during pregnancy (8%) followed by prescription pain relievers (3%).
 - Adderall®/Ritalin®/other stimulant use, cocaine use, and heroin use during pregnancy were also reported, but there were too few respondents to provide an estimate.
 - 85% of all women with a prenatal care visit were asked if they were using drugs such as marijuana, cocaine, crack, or meth.

Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT)

- 2% of women used methadone, Suboxone®, or another maintenance treatment drug during the 12 months before pregnancy.
- 3% received MAT during pregnancy.
- 3% used MAT after their new baby was born.

Oral Health

- 59% of women had a teeth cleaning during pregnancy.
 - Women whose deliveries were covered by Medicaid were less likely to have a teeth cleaning than those whose deliveries were covered by private insurance (49% to 68%).
 - Women who had a discussion with a prenatal health care provider about the health of their teeth and gums were significantly more likely to have a teeth cleaning during pregnancy than those who hadn't (64% versus 52%).
- 94% knew it was important to care for their teeth and gums during pregnancy.
- 22% needed to see a dentist for a problem during their pregnancy; of these, 34% did not see a dentist or a dental clinic about a problem.
- About half of women (52%) who received prenatal care had a discussion with a health care worker about the health of their teeth and gums during a prenatal care visit.
- Around one-third of women (35%) who received prenatal care had a doctor, nurse, or other health care worker suggest that they go see a dentist.

*The PRAMS questionnaire does not ask whether any drug or medication use is per prescription.

Immunization

- 82% of women got a Tdap vaccination during pregnancy.
- 70% got a flu shot in the 12 months before giving birth.
 - In contrast to previous years, there were no statistically significant differences by age group
- Women enrolled in Medicaid during their pregnancies were less likely to get a flu shot:
 - 62% of those whose deliveries were insured by Medicaid got a flu shot, compared to 78% of those with private insurance.
- There was no significant difference in receipt of Tdap shot by Medicaid enrollment.

“Many mothers are choosing to not vaccinate and its very dangerous for our babies. More information provided may persuade them.”

“In Vermont, providers were accommodating to me because of my PTSD and made sure I got help and had only female-led support.”

Mental Health

- 20% of women had depression at some point during the three months before pregnancy.
 - 18% of women had a health care visit for depression or anxiety in the year before pregnancy.
- 15% reported having depression at some point during pregnancy.
 - 90% of women with a prenatal care visit were asked if they were feeling down or depressed.
- 12% had symptoms indicating a risk for depression in the postpartum period.
 - 94% of women with a postpartum checkup were asked if they were feeling down or depressed.

Vehicle Safety

- When riding in a car, truck or van, 98% of infants *always* rode in an infant car seat. Two percent *often* or *sometimes* rode in an infant car seat.
- Nearly all women (99%) knew that new babies should be in rear-facing car seats.
- 97% knew that car seats should not be placed in front of an air bag.
- How did women get their new baby’s car seat(s)?
 - 44% bought a seat new;
 - 31% received it new as a gift;
 - 18% already had a seat for another baby.
 - Borrowed a car seat from a friend/family; bought a used seat; given a seat by the hospital or by a community program, and other write-in responses were all chosen by less than 10%
- How did mothers learn to install and use their infant car seats? Most respondents (about 54%) chose more than one answer for this question, and 2% did not choose an answer. The most commonly chosen responses were:
 - 58% read the instructions;
 - 46% were shown by a health/safety professional;
 - 43% felt they already knew from their older children.

Work and Workplace Leave

- 80% of women worked during their pregnancies.
 - 80% of these had returned or planned to return to their jobs by the time of the survey.
 - 40% of women who worked during pregnancy were enrolled in Medicaid for their deliveries.
 - 70% of those whose deliveries were insured by Medicaid, and 90% of women whose deliveries were covered by private insurance, worked during pregnancy.
- 46% of women who had returned or were planning to return to work after pregnancy did not have paid leave.
 - 66% of those whose deliveries were insured by Medicaid enrollees who were working or planned to return to work did not have paid leave at their jobs, compared to 34% of those who were privately insured.
 - About two-thirds (66%) of all women felt they had too little time off available to them after delivery.

“I would have liked to take more leave, but because it was unpaid I couldn't. Our family relied on credit cards and income tax return to pay our bills while I took leave. We accrued some debt. I know many moms who couldn't take even 6 weeks because it is unpaid [and] their family relies on their paycheck. I had just barely settled in a breastfeeding routine at 8 weeks, so I cannot imagine we would have been successful had I taken any less time.”

Preconception Health & Family Planning

- 77% of women had a visit to a health care provider during the 12 months before pregnancy. Of these:
 - 80% were asked about what kind of work they did;
 - 68% were asked if someone was hurting them emotionally or physically;
 - 66% were asked if they were feeling down or depressed;
 - 56% were asked whether they wanted to have or not have children;
 - 45% had a talk about using birth control;
 - 47% were told to take a vitamin with folic acid;
 - 42% had a discussion about maintaining a healthy weight;
 - 35% had a talk about improving health before a pregnancy;
 - 25% had a talk about STIs;
 - 25% were tested for HIV.
- 38% of women talked to a doctor, nurse or other health care workers about preparing for a pregnancy. Topics included:
 - 54% - getting their vaccines updated before pregnancy;
 - 52% - the safety of medicines during pregnancy;
 - 49% - how drinking during pregnancy can affect a baby;
 - 47% - visiting a dentist/dental hygienist before pregnancy;
 - 44% - how smoking during pregnancy can affect a baby;
 - 42% - how illegal drugs during pregnancy can affect a baby;
 - 27% - counseling or treatment for depression or anxiety;
 - 25% - counseling for genetic diseases.
- 33% of births resulted from unintended pregnancies.
- 90% of women with a prenatal care visit were asked if they planned to use birth control after their babies were born.

Prenatal & Postpartum Care Visits

- Nearly all women had at least one prenatal care visit. Among these women:
 - 97% were asked if they were smoking cigarettes.
 - 82% had a discussion with a healthcare worker about the signs of preterm labor.
 - 25% of women who had a preterm birth did **not** have a conversation with a healthcare worker about the signs of preterm labor.
 - 66% were asked if they knew how much weight they should gain during pregnancy.
 - 54% of women with a prenatal care visit were asked if they wanted to be tested for HIV.
 - 48% discussed seatbelt use during pregnancy with their provider.
- 94% had a postpartum checkup. Of these women:
 - 90% talked about birth control methods with a health care worker.
 - 54% talked to a health care worker about how long to wait before another pregnancy.
 - 36% were given or prescribed a contraceptive method such as the pill, patch, shot or condoms.
 - 31% had a health care worker insert an IUD or contraceptive implant.
 - 61% had a health care worker talk to them about healthy eating, exercise, and losing weight gained during pregnancy.
 - 61% were asked if they were smoking cigarettes.
 - 12% were tested for diabetes.

“[I had a] high risk pregnancy, so twice a-week [prenatal] appointments used up all paid time off I had accumulated.”

“It would also be helpful to have more prenatal and postnatal options for same sex couples/queer identifying individuals. We attended a birthing class and were the only two-mom couple there. It felt pretty isolating and limited.”

Sleep Environment

- 88% of mothers exclusively placed their infant to sleep on his or her back.
- 79% of infants always or often slept alone in their own cribs or beds.
 - 9% of infants sometimes slept alone, and 13% rarely or never slept alone.
- 40% of infants usually slept with a blanket, 10% usually slept with crib bumper pads, 5% usually slept with toys, cushions or pillows, and 5% usually slept on a couch, sofa or armchair.
- 98% of women had a doctor, nurse or other health care worker tell them to place their baby on her/his back to sleep.
 - 92% were told to place their baby to sleep in a crib, bassinet or pack and play.
 - 91% were told what things should/shouldn't go into bed with their baby.
 - 69% were told to place their baby's crib or bed in their room, a significantly higher proportion than that of mothers of infants born in 2016 (56%).

Breastfeeding

- 92% 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 about 90% or more of mothers who initiated breastfeeding: 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; the baby was placed in skin-to-skin contact within the first hour of life.
- Each of the following breastfeeding-supportive hospital practices happened for about 75% to 89% of mothers who initiated breastfeeding: 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.
- 66% of babies who were breastfed at least once were not given a pacifier by hospital staff.
- 83% of women who delivered low birthweight babies were provided with a breast pump by the hospital.
- 97% of women with a prenatal care visit were asked if they planned to breastfeed.
- 66% of all mothers were offered a class on breastfeeding.
 - 29% of first-time mothers attended a breastfeeding class.

“I love that my local lactation consultant and WIC offices worked with me. [They] helped me even though I was feeling defeated. All the doctors were ready to listen and work with this new mom -- no questions went unanswered. Our baby is doing great!”

“I love Vermont! Our family is far away (we came here for work) and that is the single issue we have because the cost of childcare is unbelievable and hard to find. So relationships, friendships and self-care are very compromised because it costs money to do anything besides work and take care of the kids. It’s not Vermont’s fault, but may limit our stay in the state (as well as the number of children we can afford to have). Thanks for listening.”

Data notes: PRAMS indicators with fewer than ten responses are not used to provide an estimate. The PRAMS questionnaire is sent to Vermont resident mothers who gave birth two to six months prior to being sampled. Quotes in text boxes were written in as comments by respondents, and may be edited for confidentiality and clarity.

Questions or comments about this report, or requests for further data, may be sent to John Davy at 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>.