

Reports of depression among pregnant people are increasing. This new data is from the Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS), a survey of Vermonters who recently gave birth. It asks about experiences, behaviors, and healthcare before, during and shortly after pregnancy. The following data on depression includes people who gave birth between 2016 and 2022.

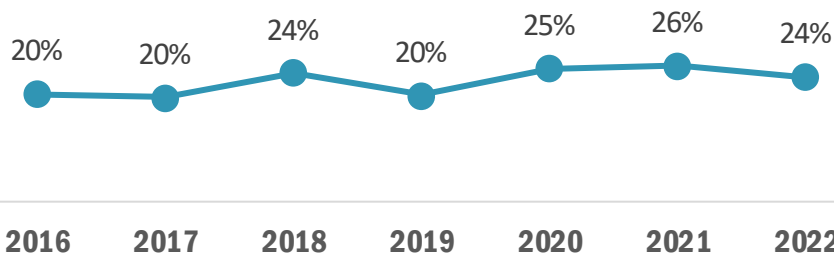
Before Pregnancy

The average rate of depression before pregnancy was 23%. The year-to-year rate difference is significant, varying from 20% to 26% as seen in the chart below.

More than 1 in 5 Vermonters had depression before pregnancy



Pre-pregnancy depression increased during COVID-19



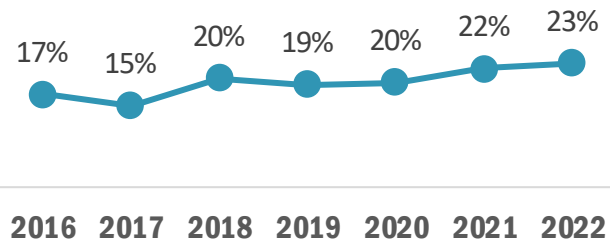
KEY POINTS

- Depression rate is highest before pregnancy followed by during and after.
- Pregnant people who are 24 or younger, enrolled in Medicaid, and have less than high school education is more likely to report they are depressed.
- 5% of pregnant people report depression in all 3 periods.

During Pregnancy

Similar rates are seen during pregnancy as before pregnancy. On average, almost 20% of pregnant people in Vermont experience depression. Between 2016 and 2022, the rate has increased, going up six percentage points (17%-23%).

Depressed During Pregnancy

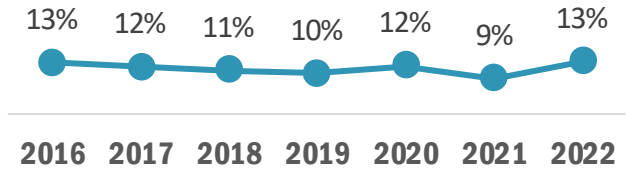


After Delivery

On average, 11% of people who give birth show signs of postpartum depression. Between 2016 and 2022 this ranged from 9% to 13%.

* Confirmed cases of postpartum depression could be underestimated by the VT PRAMS survey since there is a wide range of symptoms associated with this condition.

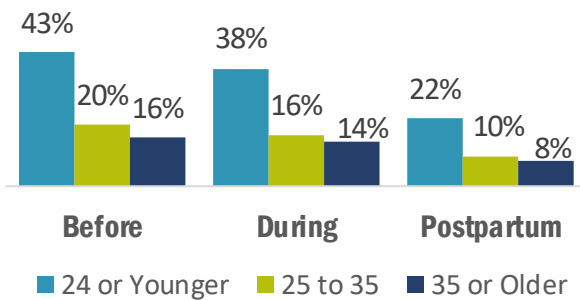
At Risk for Postpartum Depression*



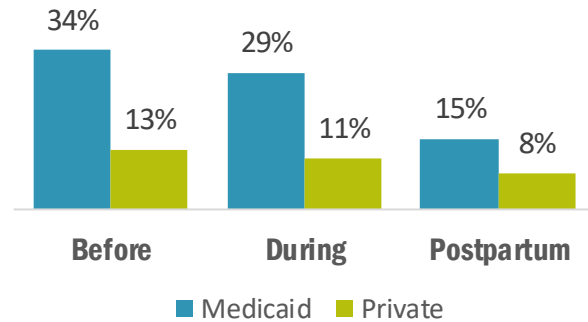
Characteristics of Women Who Were Depressed

In all three periods (before, during and postpartum), depression is significantly more common among women under 24 years old, enrolled in Medicaid and have less than a high school education.

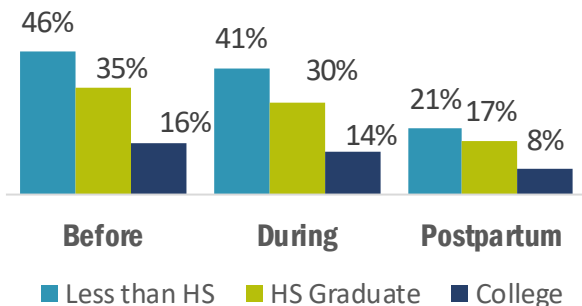
Depression by Age



Depression and Insurance Type



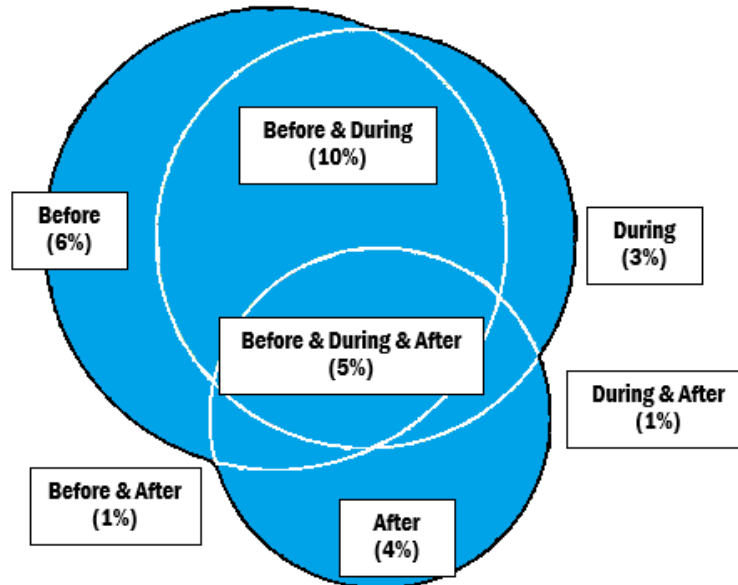
Depression by Education Level



Depression in Multiple Time Periods

For some, depression can be experienced during more than one time period. For example, people may experience depression during pregnancy and in postpartum. About 12% of people reported depression in at least two time periods.

- 10% are depressed three months before pregnancy and during pregnancy.
- 5% report depression in all three periods.



Key Takeaways

Maternal depression is common and can lead to health issues for both the pregnant person and baby. It is very important for anyone who is pregnant or may become pregnant to talk to a healthcare provider about depression. Getting timely care to manage symptoms, create plans for when extra help is needed from friends and family members, and to avoid risky behaviors associated with depression that may result in poor pregnancy outcomes, is essential to improve quality of life for all.

This data brief will be followed by more detailed analyses of maternal depression and other health behaviors. For more information on Maternal Depression and resources please go here:

<https://www.healthvermont.gov/family/family-planning-pregnancy/support-delivered-perinatal-mood-and-anxiety-info-resources>

For more information: Please contact PRAMS Coordinator, Lucia Orantes
Lucia.Orantes@vermont.gov