Maternal mortality (42 days)

Pregnancy-related mortality (one year)

Pregnancy-associated mortality: Deaths during pregnancy and up to one year postpartum

Pregnancy-related mortality: Deaths during pregnancy and up to one year postpartum that are related to pregnancy

Maternal mortality: Deaths during pregnancy and up to 42 days postpartum that are related to pregnancy

Half of pregnancy-related deaths occur after the day of birth.

- Maternal deaths during pregnancy: 31%
- Maternal deaths around time of delivery: 17%
- Postpartum maternal deaths (up to 1 year): 52%

**CONCEPTION**
- Preconception
  - PRECONCEPTION CARE

**PRENATAL CARE**
- Primary care, including midwife services

**DELIVERY/BIRTH**
- Pregnancy
  - Prenatal care
    - Primary care, including midwife services

**POSTNATAL CARE**
- Post-pregnancy or “fourth trimester”
  - Postnatal care
    - Primary care, including midwives

Maternal mortality had been gradually declining before recently rising.

Note: Shifts in measurement (e.g., not all states were part of registration system prior to 1933; infant race was based on race of the child until 1980 and on race of the mother post-1980) account for some of the variation over time. Years 2007–2016 based on two-year estimates of the pregnancy-related mortality rate: Emily E. Petersen et al., “Racial/Ethnic Disparities in Pregnancy-Related Deaths — United States, 2007–2016,” Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report 68, no. 35 (Sept. 6, 2019): 762–65. Data for 2017 unavailable; data for 2018 based on official NVSS rate.

Black mothers have been more likely to die than white mothers for 100 years.

Ratio of Black to white maternal mortality

Notes: Shifts in measurement account for some of the variation over time. For example, not all states were part of registration system prior to 1933, and infant race was based on race of the child until 1980 and then race of the mother after 1980.

Different race and ethnicities, different causes of pregnancy-related deaths, U.S., 2007–16

**Cause-specific pregnancy-related mortality in the U.S. by race/ethnicity, 2007–2016 (%)**

Note: AIAN = American Indian and Alaska Native. Asian PI = Asian Pacific Islander.

Even higher education does not protect Black mothers from pregnancy-related death (U.S., 2007–16).

Maternal deaths are more common among Black mothers with a college education than they are among white mothers with less than a high school education.

Pregnancy-related mortality ratios per 100,000 births in the U.S., 2007–2016

Pregnancy-related deaths are clinical and public health challenges.

Leading clinical causes of pregnancy-related mortality up to one year post-birth, U.S., 2007–2016 (%)

- Other cardiovascular conditions: 15.3%
- Other noncardiovascular conditions: 13.3%
- Infection: 13.3%
- Severe bleeding: 11.1%
- Heart muscle disease: 11.1%
- Blood clots: 9.2%
- High blood pressure: 7.8%
- Stroke: 7.2%
- Amniotic fluid embolism: 5.4%
- Anesthesia complications: 0.4%
- Unknown: 5.8%

The underlying causes of pregnancy-related maternal deaths vary according to when mothers die.


- Mental health condition
- High blood pressure/seizures
- Embolism
- Heart muscle disease
- Infection
- Other heart conditions
- Severe bleeding


A woman’s chance of dying in childbirth is twice as high in some states than in others (maternal mortality by state, U.S., 2018).

**Variation in state maternal mortality rates, 2018**

**Maternal mortality ratio**
(per 100,000 births)

- Not available
- <15
- 15.0–19.9
- 20.0–29.9
- 30.0+