

Selected preterm birth rates for 2014 have been corrected in the text and in Tables 5, 6, and I-2--July 26, 2016

## Births: Preliminary Data for 2015

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### Abstract

**Objectives**—This report presents preliminary 2015 data on U.S. births. Births are shown by age and race and Hispanic origin of mother. Data on marital status, cesarean delivery, preterm births, and low birthweight are also presented.

**Methods**—Data are based on 99.53% of 2015 births. Records for the few states with less than 100% of records received are weighted to independent control counts of all births received in state vital statistics offices in 2015. Comparisons are made with final 2014 data and earlier years.

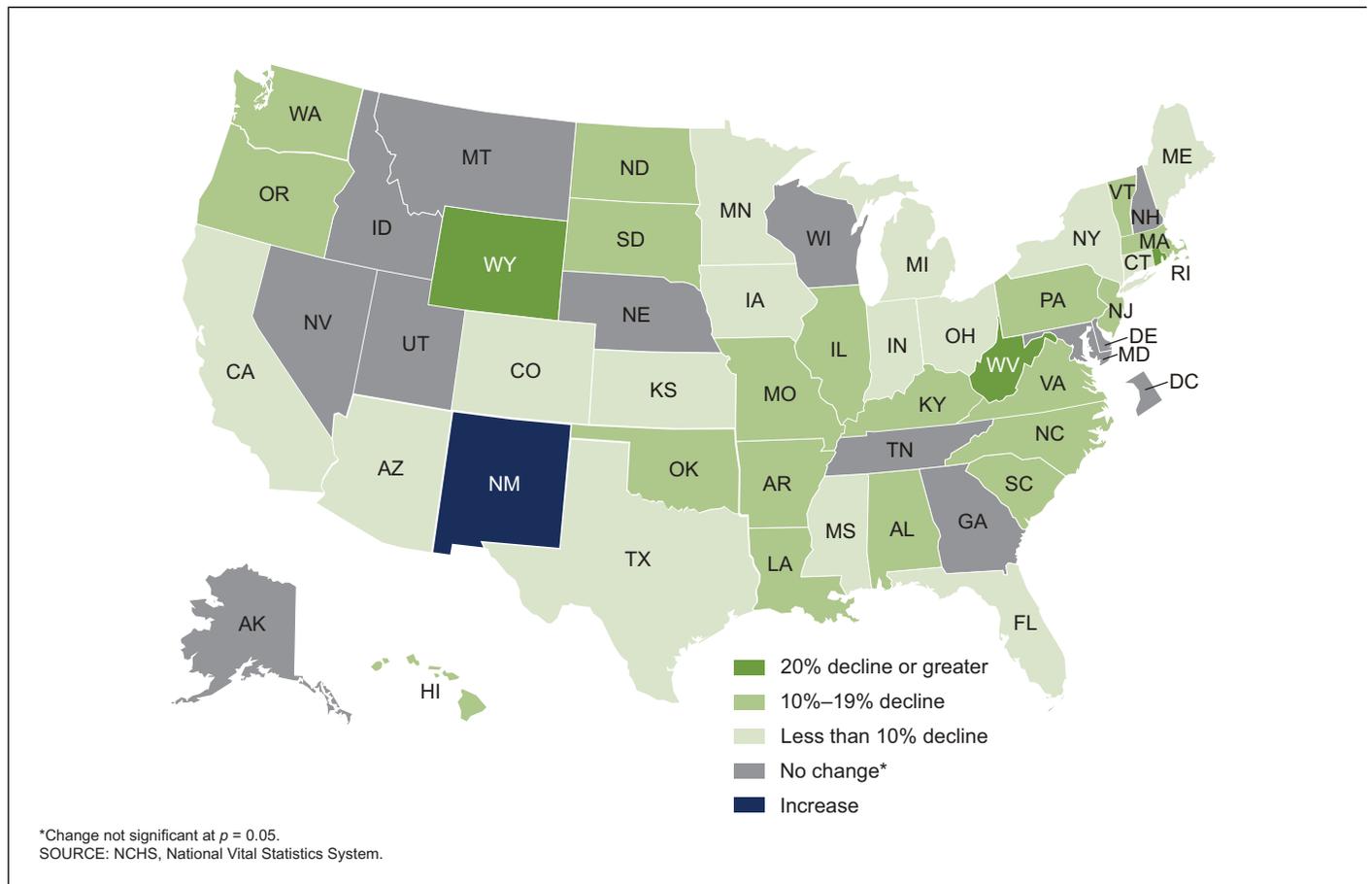


Figure 1. Percent change in low-risk cesarean delivery rates, by state: United States, final 2009 and preliminary 2015



**Results**—The 2015 preliminary number of U.S. births was 3,977,745, down slightly (less than 1%) from 2014. For the three largest race and Hispanic origin groups in the United States, the number of births decreased for non-Hispanic white women, increased for Hispanic women, and were essentially unchanged for non-Hispanic black women in 2015. The general fertility rate was 62.5 births per 1,000 women aged 15–44, down less than 1% from 2014. The birth rate for teenagers aged 15–19 decreased 8% in 2015 to 22.3 births per 1,000 women, another historic low for the country; rates decreased for both younger and older teenagers to record lows. The birth rate for women in their early 20s declined to 76.9 births per 1,000 women, another record low. The rate for women in their late 20s declined as well, to 104.3 births, also a record low. Birth rates for women in their 30s and early 40s increased in 2015. The nonmarital birth rate declined 1% in 2015, to 43.5 births per 1,000 unmarried women aged 15–44. The cesarean delivery rate declined for the third year in a row to 32.0%, and the low-risk cesarean delivery rate declined again to 25.7% in 2015. The preterm birth rate (based on obstetric estimate of gestation) was up slightly in 2015 to 9.62%, the first increase in this rate since 2007. The low birthweight rate was also up in 2015 to 8.07%.

**Keywords:** birth rates • maternal and infant health • vital statistics

## Introduction

This report from the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) presents preliminary data on births and birth rates and selected maternal and infant health characteristics (including low-risk cesarean delivery [Figure 1]) for the United States in 2015. The findings are based on nearly 100% of registered vital records occurring in calendar year 2015, which were received and processed by NCHS as of February 11, 2016. Trends in the preliminary reports for 1995–2014 births were confirmed by the final vital statistics for each year (1,2). Comparisons are based on the final data for 2014 and earlier years (2). Changes and differences presented in this report are statistically significant at the 0.05 level, unless noted otherwise.

Beginning with the 2014 data year, NCHS transitioned to a new standard for estimating the gestational age of the newborn. The new measure—the obstetric estimate of gestation at delivery (OE)—replaces the measure based on the date of the last normal menses (LMP) (3). Accordingly, gestational age data shown in this report are based on the OE. However, LMP-based data are also available for all relevant report tables from: [http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr65/nvsr65\\_03\\_tables.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr65/nvsr65_03_tables.pdf). National data based on OE data are available only from data year 2007 forward. Gestational age estimates differ somewhat between the OE- and LMP-based measures. The reasons for the change and a detailed comparison of the two measures are presented in: “Measuring Gestational Age in Vital Statistics Data: Transitioning to the Obstetric Estimate” (3).

State-specific detailed tables for 2015 births, based on preliminary data and showing the percentages of births delivered by cesarean and born preterm, are available on the NCHS website (see [Internet Tables I-1 and I-2 at http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr65/nvsr65\\_03\\_tables.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr65/nvsr65_03_tables.pdf)).

Population estimates by age, sex, and race and Hispanic origin for 2015 at the national and state levels were not available as of the preparation of this report. Accordingly, birth and fertility rates by race

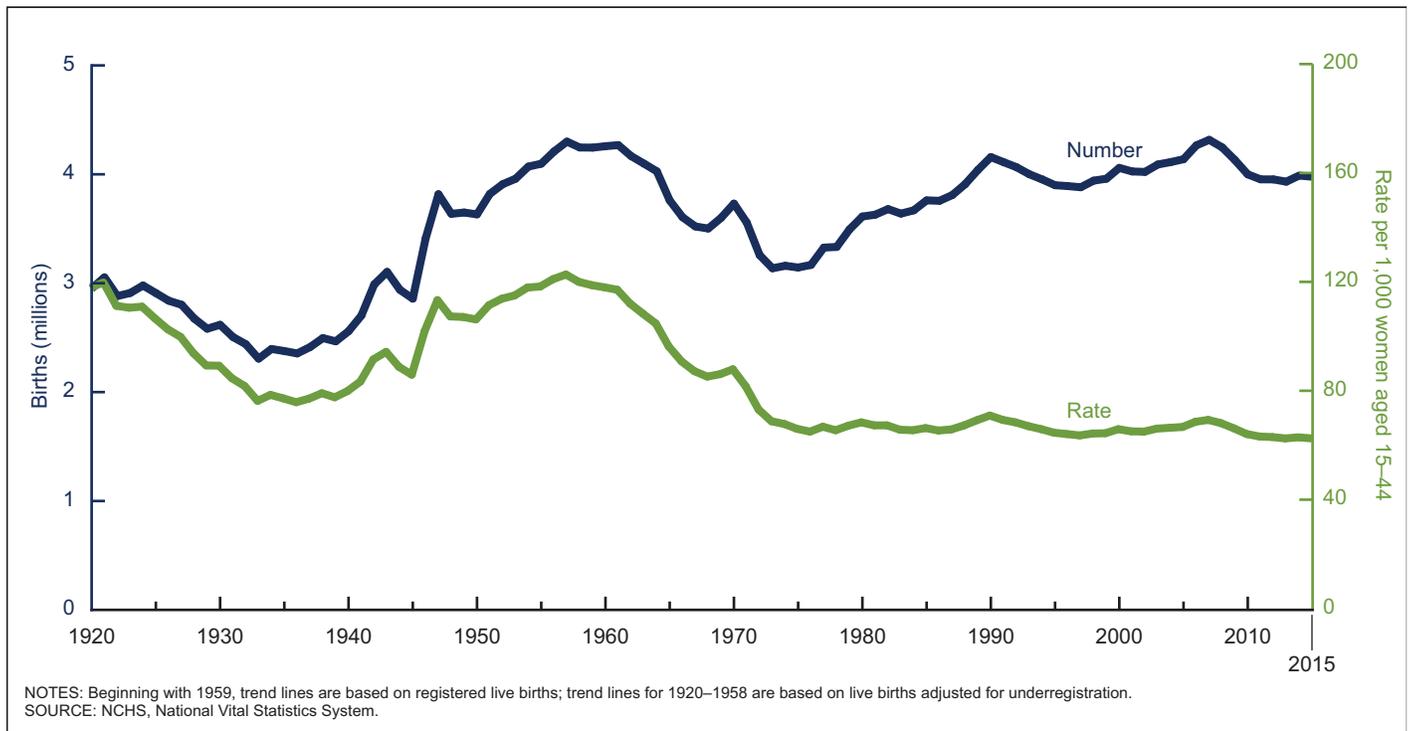
and Hispanic origin and fertility rates by state could not be shown here. These rates will be shown in the 2015 final birth report.

## Results

### Births and birth rates

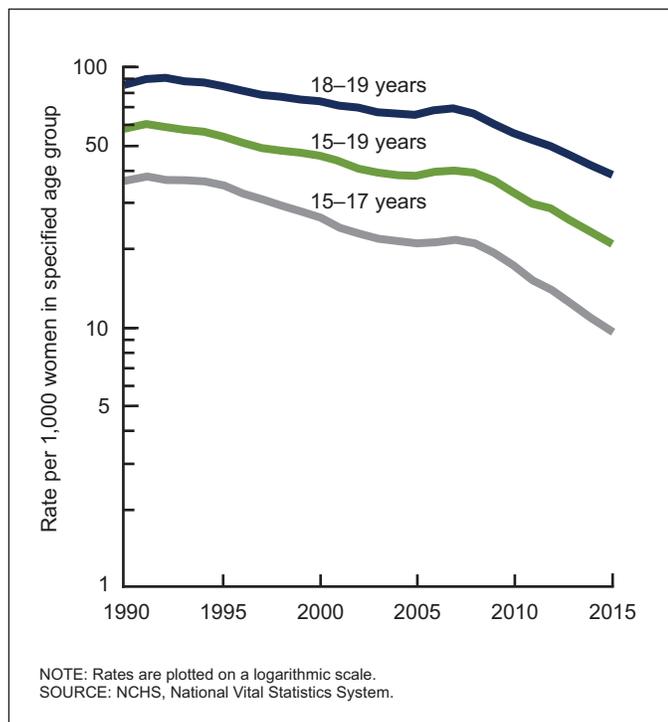
Key findings, illustrated in [Tables 1–4](#) and [Figures 2–4](#), are listed below:

- The preliminary **number of births** for the United States in 2015 was 3,977,745, a decrease of less than 1% (0.3%) from 2014 (3,988,076) ([Table 1](#) and [Figure 2](#)). This decline followed the increase in births from 2013 to 2014, which was the first increase since 2007 (2).
- The number of births decreased 1% for non-Hispanic white women from 2014 to 2015, whereas births to Hispanic women increased 1%, and births to non-Hispanic black women were essentially unchanged ([Table 3](#)) (2). The number of births decreased 1% for American Indian or Alaska Native (AIAN) women and were essentially unchanged for Asian or Pacific Islander (API) women.
- The preliminary **general fertility rate** (GFR) for the United States also decreased less than 1% in 2015, to 62.5 births per 1,000 women aged 15–44, from 62.9 in 2014 ([Table 1](#) and [Figure 2](#)) (2). This decline follows an increase in the rate from 2013 to 2014, the first increase since 2007.
- The preliminary **birth rate for teenagers** in 2015 was 22.3 births per 1,000 women aged 15–19—yet another historic low for the country ([Tables 1](#) and [2](#) and [Figures 3](#) and [4](#)) (2,4,5). The rate was down 8% from 2014 (24.2) and has declined more than 46% since 2007. Since the most recent peak in 1991 (61.8), the rate has declined a total of 64% (5). In 2015, the preliminary number of births to women aged 15–19 was 229,888 ([Table 1](#)), down 8% from 2014 and 48% from 2007 (444,899) (2,5).
  - In 2015, the preliminary birth rates for teenagers aged 15–17 and 18–19 fell 9% and 7%, respectively, to 9.9 and 40.7 births per 1,000 women. These rates were yet another record low for both groups, from 10.9 and 43.8 in 2014. Since 2007, the rate for teenagers aged 15–17 has dropped 54%, and the rate for those aged 18–19 has dropped 43%. The number of births for teenagers aged 15–17 declined 8% from 2014 to 2015, and births to those aged 18–19 declined 7%.
  - The birth rate for females aged 10–14 was 0.2 births per 1,000 in 2015, declining from 2014 (0.3), to a new historic low for the country. The number of births to mothers in this age group declined 10% in 2015, to 2,503 births.
- The preliminary **birth rate for women aged 20–24** was 76.9 births per 1,000 women in 2015, declining 3% from the rate in 2014 (79.0), reaching yet another record low for the country ([Table 1](#) and [Figure 4](#)) (2,4). The rate for women in this age group has declined steadily by 27% since 2007. The number of births to women in their early 20s decreased 4% from 2014 to 2015 ([Table 1](#)). The **rate for women aged 25–29** was 104.3 births per 1,000 women, dropping 1% from the rate in 2014 (105.8) (2).



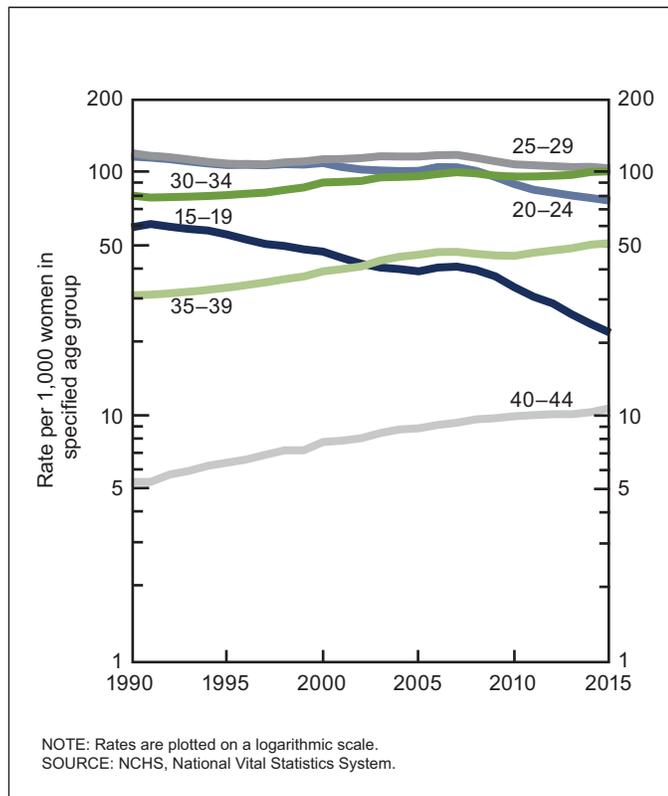
**Figure 2. Live births and general fertility rates: United States, final 1920–2014 and preliminary 2015**

From 2008 to 2013, the rate for women in this age group declined steadily by 8%, but increased slightly from 2013 to 2014 (2). The number of births to women in their late 20s increased 1% from 2014 to 2015.



**Figure 3. Birth rates for women aged 15–19, by age group: United States, final 1990–2014 and preliminary 2015**

- The preliminary **birth rate for women aged 30–34** in 2015 was 101.4 births per 1,000 women, an increase of less than 1% from the rate in 2014 (100.8) (Table 1 and Figure 4). The rate for this group has increased steadily by 5% since 2011. The number of births to women in their early 30s also increased in 2015 by 1%. The **rate for women aged 35–39** was 51.7 births per 1,000 women, up 1% from 2014 (51.0). The rate for this group has increased steadily by 13% since 2010 (2). The number of births to women in their late 30s increased 4% in 2015.
- The preliminary **birth rate for women aged 40–44** in 2015 was 11.0 births per 1,000 women, up 4% from 2014 (10.6). Since 1982, the rate for women in their early 40s has either risen or remained unchanged (2,4). The number of births to these women increased 1% in 2015. The **rate for women aged 45–49** (which includes births to women aged 50 and over) was 0.8 births per 1,000 women, unchanged from 2014. The number of births to women in this age group increased 5% in 2015 (Table 1).
- The preliminary **total fertility rate (TFR)** for the United States in 2015 was 1,843.0 births per 1,000 women, a decrease of 1% from the rate in 2014 (1,862.5) (2). The TFR estimates the number of births that a hypothetical group of 1,000 women would have over their lifetimes, based on the age-specific birth rates in a given year.
  - The TFR in 2015 was below replacement—the level at which a given generation can exactly replace itself (2,100 births per 1,000 women). The rate has generally been below replacement since 1971 (2).
- The preliminary **birth rate for unmarried women** in 2015 was 43.5 births per 1,000 unmarried women aged 15–44, down 1% from 2014 (43.9) and marking the seventh consecutive year of decline since the all-time peak in 2007 and 2008 (51.8) (2).



**Figure 4. Birth rates, by selected age of mother: United States, final 1990–2014 and preliminary 2015**

- In 2015, the number of births to unmarried women was 1,600,208, a less than 1% (0.3%) decline from 2014 (1,604,870) (Table 4). The 2015 preliminary number of nonmarital births was 7% lower than the 2008 peak (1,726,566) (1,2).
- The percentage of all births to unmarried women was 40.2% in 2015, unchanged from 2014. The percentages increased slightly (less than 1%) for women in age groups 15–24 and increased 2%–3% for women in age groups 25 and over.
- The percentage of births to unmarried women by race and Hispanic origin declined for only one group—non-Hispanic black women—down less than 1% from 2014 to 2015, and was essentially unchanged for all other groups. The percentage of births to unmarried mothers in 2015 ranged from 16.4% for API women to 70.4% for non-Hispanic black women.

## Maternal and infant health characteristics

Key findings, illustrated in Tables 5 and 6 and Figure 1, are listed below:

- In 2015, the preliminary overall **cesarean delivery rate** declined for the third year in a row to 32.0%, down from 32.2% in 2014 (Table 5). After peaking in 2009 at 32.9%, the rate remained stable from 2010 to 2012 (2). The 2015 preliminary rate is the lowest since 2007.
- The cesarean delivery rate for non-Hispanic white women declined for the sixth straight year in 2015 to 31.1%, down 1% from 2014 (31.4%) and down 5% from the peak in 2009

(32.8%). For Hispanic women, the cesarean delivery rate declined for the second consecutive year to 31.7%. Rates for non-Hispanic black (35.5%), AIAN (28.3%), and API (33.0%) women were essentially unchanged for 2015 (Table 5) (2).

- The **rate of low-risk cesarean delivery**, which is cesarean delivery among nulliparous (first birth), term (37 or more completed weeks based on the obstetric estimate), singleton (one fetus), vertex (head-first) births, declined to 25.7% in 2015. This is 1% lower than the 2014 rate (26.0%).
- As with overall cesarean delivery, low-risk cesarean delivery declined for non-Hispanic white and Hispanic women in 2015. The rate for Hispanic women declined more than one-half of a percentage point from 25.8% in 2014 to 25.2% in 2015 (Table 5). The rates for other racial and ethnic groups were essentially unchanged in 2015 from 2014.
- Low-risk cesarean delivery rates declined in 10 states from 2014 to 2015 (Table I-1). Since the peak in 2009, low-risk cesarean delivery rates have dropped in 37 states, with declines of more than 20% in Wyoming, Rhode Island, and West Virginia (Figure 1). Low-risk cesarean increased in 1 state (New Mexico) from 2009 to 2015.
- The 2015 preliminary **preterm birth rate** (based on the obstetric estimate of gestation; see Introduction) was up slightly for 2015, to 9.62% from 9.57% in 2014. This marks the first increase in this rate since at least 2007 (the first year for which national data are available for the obstetric estimate of gestation) (Tables 5 and 6) (3).
  - The **late preterm birth rate** (34–36 weeks), which had declined 9% from 2007 (7.51%) to 2014 (6.82%), rose in 2015 to 6.87% (Table 6). The percentage of infants born early preterm (less than 34 weeks) was essentially unchanged at 2.75% and was down 6% from 2007.
  - The preterm rate for non-Hispanic white infants was essentially unchanged for 2014–2015 (from 8.91% to 8.88%), but rose among non-Hispanic black (13.23% to 13.39%) and Hispanic (9.03% to 9.13%) infants (Table 5). Preterm rates had declined fairly steadily from 2007 to 2014 for non-Hispanic white (10%) and non-Hispanic black (10%) infants but fluctuated among Hispanic infants (2,3).
  - Preterm birth rates declined in 41 states and the District of Columbia from 2007 to 2015 (3). Rates for 8 states did not change significantly, and the preterm rate for Wisconsin increased (Table I-2 for 2014 and 2015 data).
- Following a downward trend from 2007 to 2014, the U.S. **low birthweight rate** (the percentage of infants born at less than 2,500 grams or 5 lb, 8 oz) rose in 2015 to 8.07%, up from 8.00% in 2014 (2). The percentage of **very low birthweight** (VLBW) infants (less than 1,500 grams) was essentially stable at 1.39% in 2015. The VLBW level has also declined in recent years, from a peak of 1.49% for 2005–2007 (Table 5) (2). The percentage of infants delivered at moderately low birthweight (1,500–2,499 grams) rose to 6.67% in 2015, from 6.60% in 2014. This rate peaked in 2006 at 6.77%.
  - Low birthweight (LBW) levels were essentially unchanged in 2015 for non-Hispanic white infants (6.93 in 2015) but increased for non-Hispanic black infants (from 13.17% to

13.33%) and Hispanic infants (7.05% to 7.20%). Since 2006, modest declines in LBW were reported for non-Hispanic white and non-Hispanic black births (5%), but the rate among Hispanic infants rose by 3% (see Table 5 for 2014 and 2015 data) (2).

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## List of Detailed Tables

### Report tables

- |   |    |
|---|----|
| 1. Births and birth rates, by age of mother: United States, final 2014 and preliminary 2015 . . . . .   | 6  |
| 2. Birth rates for women aged 10–19, by age of mother: United States, final 1991, 2007, and 2014, and preliminary 2015. . . . .   | 7  |
| 3. Births, by race and Hispanic origin of mother: United States and each state and territory, preliminary 2015. . . . .   | 8  |
| 4. Births and percentages of births to unmarried women, by age of mother and race and Hispanic origin of mother: United States, final 2014 and preliminary 2015 . . . . . | 10 |
| 5. Selected health characteristics of births, by race and Hispanic origin of mother: United States, final 2014 and preliminary 2015 . . . . .                             | 11 |
| 6. Distribution of births born preterm: United States, final 2007 and 2014 and preliminary 2015 . . . . .   | 11 |
| 7. Total count of records and completeness of preliminary file of live births: United States and each state and territory, preliminary 2015 . . . . .                     | 12 |

### List of Internet tables

(Available from:

[http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr65/nvsr65\\_03\\_tables.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr65/nvsr65_03_tables.pdf))

- Births, by total cesarean delivery and low-risk cesarean delivery: United States and each state and territory, final 2014 and preliminary 2015
- Preterm and late preterm births: United States and each state and territory, final 2014 and preliminary 2015

#### In the following tables, gestational age data are based on the date of the last normal menses:

- Selected health characteristics of births (gestational age based on LMP), by race and Hispanic origin of mother: United States, final 2014 and preliminary 2015
- Distribution of births born preterm (gestational age based on LMP): United States, final 2007 and 2014 and preliminary 2015
- Births, by total cesarean delivery and low-risk cesarean delivery (gestational age based on LMP): United States and each state and territory, final 2014 and preliminary 2015
- Preterm and late preterm births (gestational age based on LMP): United States and each state and territory, final 2014 and preliminary 2015

**Table 1. Births and birth rates, by age of mother: United States, final 2014 and preliminary 2015**

[Data for 2015 are based on a continuous file of records received from the states. Figures for 2015 are based on weighted data rounded to the nearest individual, so categories may not add to totals. Rates are per 1,000 women in specified age group. Rates for all ages are the total number of births (regardless of the age of the mother) per 1,000 women aged 15–44]

Age of mother	2015		2014	
	Number	Rate	Number	Rate
All ages. . . . .	3,977,745	62.5	3,988,076	62.9
10–14. . . . .	2,503	0.2	2,769	0.3
15–19. . . . .	229,888	22.3	249,078	24.2
15–17 . . . . .	61,223	9.9	66,791	10.9
18–19 . . . . .	168,665	40.7	182,287	43.8
20–24 . . . . .	851,142	76.9	882,567	79.0
25–29. . . . .	1,152,660	104.3	1,145,392	105.8
30–34. . . . .	1,093,898	101.4	1,081,058	100.8
35–39. . . . .	527,168	51.7	508,748	51.0
40–44 . . . . .	111,611	11.0	110,021	10.6
45–54 <sup>1</sup> . . . . .	8,876	0.8	8,443	0.8

<sup>1</sup>The birth rate for women in this age group is computed by relating the number of births to women aged 45 and over to women aged 45–49, because most of the births in this group are to women aged 45–49.

NOTE: For information on the relative standard errors of the data and further discussion of random variation, see reference 6.

**Table 2. Birth rates for women aged 10–19, by age of mother: United States, final 1991, 2007, and 2014, and preliminary 2015**

[Data for 2015 are based on a continuous file of records received from the states. Figures for 2015 are based on weighted data rounded to the nearest individual. Rates are per 1,000 women in specified age group. Population based on counts estimated as of July 1 for all years]

Age of mother	Year				Percent change		
	2015	2014	2007	1991	2014–2015	2007–2015	1991–2015
10–14 . . . . .	0.2	0.3	0.6	1.4	–33	–67	–86
15–19 . . . . .	22.3	24.2	41.5	61.8	–8	–46	–64
15–17 . . . . .	9.9	10.9	21.7	38.6	–9	–54	–74
18–19 . . . . .	40.7	43.8	71.7	94.0	–7	–43	–57

NOTE: For information on the relative standard errors of the data and further discussion of random variation, see reference 6.

**Table 3. Births, by race and Hispanic origin of mother: United States and each state and territory, preliminary 2015**

[By place of residence. Data are based on a continuous file of records received from the states. Figures are based on weighted data rounded to the nearest individual, so categories may not add to totals]

Area	Number					
	All races and origins <sup>1</sup>	Non-Hispanic white <sup>2</sup>	Non-Hispanic black <sup>2</sup>	American Indian or Alaska Native total <sup>2,3</sup>	Asian or Pacific Islander total <sup>2,3</sup>	Hispanic <sup>4</sup>
United States <sup>5</sup> . . . . .	3,977,745	2,129,657	589,605	44,328	281,306	922,836
Alabama . . . . .	59,632	35,811	18,254	190	1,193	4,292
Alaska . . . . .	11,266	6,534	422	2,410	1,114	809
Arizona . . . . .	85,344	36,972	4,581	5,317	3,518	35,246
Arkansas . . . . .	38,841	25,684	7,576	353	1,235	4,005
California . . . . .	491,487	141,388	27,019	3,501	80,275	234,238
Colorado . . . . .	66,530	40,833	3,454	803	2,973	18,132
Connecticut . . . . .	35,754	20,401	4,440	97	2,499	8,275
Delaware . . . . .	11,164	5,955	2,987	16	675	1,532
District of Columbia . . . . .	9,583	2,979	4,800	16	500	1,330
Florida . . . . .	224,263	102,537	49,605	372	7,618	64,077
Georgia . . . . .	131,309	60,267	45,437	295	6,465	17,832
Hawaii . . . . .	18,395	4,785	577	35	11,441	2,770
Idaho . . . . .	22,821	18,081	240	406	516	3,645
Illinois . . . . .	158,081	85,401	27,159	209	10,221	33,893
Indiana . . . . .	83,995	63,426	10,343	120	2,524	7,634
Iowa . . . . .	39,494	32,037	2,503	241	1,364	3,420
Kansas . . . . .	39,143	28,227	2,911	330	1,483	6,300
Kentucky . . . . .	55,945	46,302	5,278	89	1,317	3,004
Louisiana . . . . .	64,542	33,972	24,006	392	1,498	4,810
Maine . . . . .	12,605	11,558	463	143	186	251
Maryland . . . . .	73,598	32,403	23,645	279	5,835	11,734
Massachusetts . . . . .	71,566	43,352	6,830	138	6,749	12,812
Michigan . . . . .	113,501	79,053	21,895	782	4,304	7,449
Minnesota . . . . .	69,803	49,652	8,028	1,414	5,658	4,851
Mississippi . . . . .	38,390	19,634	16,416	259	556	1,612
Missouri . . . . .	75,060	57,079	11,312	359	2,131	4,044
Montana . . . . .	12,582	10,271	89	1,558	152	573
Nebraska . . . . .	26,662	19,187	1,870	556	989	4,248
Nevada . . . . .	36,272	14,920	4,453	510	3,337	13,219
New Hampshire . . . . .	12,417	10,907	237	26	526	639
New Jersey . . . . .	103,203	46,559	15,221	179	11,992	28,694
New Mexico . . . . .	26,012	7,241	476	3,479	525	14,515
New York . . . . .	236,814	115,529	36,881	736	26,631	54,049
North Carolina . . . . .	120,815	67,091	28,869	1,976	5,858	18,091
North Dakota . . . . .	11,311	8,794	573	985	344	579
Ohio . . . . .	139,217	103,553	23,731	253	4,366	6,972
Oklahoma . . . . .	53,067	33,260	4,991	5,920	1,760	7,398
Oregon . . . . .	45,583	32,086	1,331	813	2,897	8,511
Pennsylvania . . . . .	141,948	98,442	20,295	393	7,021	15,053
Rhode Island . . . . .	10,967	6,681	953	138	639	2,612
South Carolina . . . . .	58,124	33,918	17,798	217	1,288	4,940
South Dakota . . . . .	12,331	9,061	328	2,163	322	559
Tennessee . . . . .	81,460	55,375	16,655	202	2,161	7,224
Texas . . . . .	403,385	140,463	49,624	1,270	21,775	191,054
Utah . . . . .	50,779	38,473	644	700	1,875	7,876
Vermont . . . . .	5,903	5,370	131	25	175	139
Virginia . . . . .	103,229	59,190	21,769	253	8,532	13,923
Washington . . . . .	88,960	55,307	4,615	2,059	10,654	16,072
West Virginia . . . . .	19,797	18,448	698	27	225	330
Wisconsin . . . . .	67,034	49,017	7,099	1,029	3,276	6,603
Wyoming . . . . .	7,758	6,190	87	294	135	963

See footnotes at end of table.

**Table 3. Births, by race and Hispanic origin of mother: United States and each state and territory, preliminary 2015—Con.**

[By place of residence. Data are based on a continuous file of records received from the states. Figures are based on weighted data rounded to the nearest individual, so categories may not add to totals]

Area	Number					
	All races and origins <sup>1</sup>	Non-Hispanic white <sup>2</sup>	Non-Hispanic black <sup>2</sup>	American Indian or Alaska Native total <sup>2,3</sup>	Asian or Pacific Islander total <sup>2,3</sup>	Hispanic <sup>4</sup>
Puerto Rico . . . . .	31,272	1,460	134	40	52	29,573
Virgin Islands . . . . .	---	---	---	---	---	---
Guam . . . . .	3,371	193	34	11	3,108	32
American Samoa . . . . .	1,058	---	---	—	1,057	---
Northern Marianas . . . . .	384	1	—	—	383	—

--- Data not available.

— Quantity zero.

<sup>1</sup>Includes births to race and origin groups not shown separately, such as white-Hispanic and black-Hispanic women, and births with origin not stated.

<sup>2</sup>Race and Hispanic origin are reported separately on birth certificates. Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race. Race categories are consistent with the 1977 Office of Management and Budget (OMB) standards. Forty-nine states and the District of Columbia reported multiple race data in 2015. The multiple-race data for these states were bridged to the single race categories of the OMB standards for comparability with other states; see Technical Notes.

<sup>3</sup>Includes persons of Hispanic and non-Hispanic origin and origin not stated, according to the mother's reported race; see Technical Notes.

<sup>4</sup>Includes all persons of Hispanic origin of any race; see Technical Notes.

<sup>5</sup>Excludes data for the territories.

NOTE: For information on the relative standard errors of the data and further discussion of random variation, see reference 6.

**Table 4. Births and percentages of births to unmarried women, by age of mother and race and Hispanic origin of mother: United States, final 2014 and preliminary 2015**

[Data for 2015 are based on a continuous file of records received from the states. Figures for 2015 are based on weighted data rounded to the nearest individual, so categories may not add to totals]

Characteristics	Number		Percent	
	2015	2014	2015	2014
Age of mother				
All ages <sup>1</sup> . . . . .	1,600,208	1,604,870	40.2	40.2
Under 20 . . . . .	206,530	223,386	88.9	88.7
Under 15 . . . . .	2,490	2,752	99.5	99.4
15–19 . . . . .	204,040	220,634	88.8	88.6
15–17 . . . . .	58,546	63,904	95.6	95.7
18–19 . . . . .	145,494	156,730	86.3	86.0
20–24 . . . . .	560,494	579,760	65.9	65.7
25–29 . . . . .	435,054	419,792	37.7	36.7
30–34 . . . . .	251,962	243,054	23.0	22.5
35–39 . . . . .	116,338	110,058	22.1	21.6
40 and over . . . . .	29,831	28,820	24.8	24.3
Race and Hispanic origin of mother				
Non-Hispanic white <sup>2</sup> . . . . .	621,468	628,078	29.2	29.2
Non-Hispanic black <sup>2</sup> . . . . .	415,029	417,518	70.4	70.9
American Indian or Alaska Native total <sup>2,3</sup> . . . . .	29,156	29,529	65.8	65.7
Asian or Pacific Islander total <sup>2,3</sup> . . . . .	46,199	46,342	16.4	16.4
Hispanic <sup>4</sup> . . . . .	488,213	483,807	52.9	52.9

<sup>1</sup>Includes births to race and origin groups not shown separately, such as white-Hispanic and black-Hispanic women, and births with origin not stated.

<sup>2</sup>Race and Hispanic origin are reported separately on birth certificates. Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race. Race categories are consistent with the 1977 Office of Management and Budget (OMB) standards. Forty-nine states and the District of Columbia reported multiple-race data in 2015. The multiple-race data for these states were bridged to the single-race categories of the OMB standards for comparability with other states; see Technical Notes. Multiple-race reporting areas vary for 2014–2015; see Technical Notes.

<sup>3</sup>Includes persons of Hispanic and non-Hispanic origin and origin not stated, according to the mother's reported race; see Technical Notes.

<sup>4</sup>Includes all persons of Hispanic origin of any race; see Technical Notes.

NOTE: For information on the relative standard errors of the data and further discussion of random variation, see reference 6.

**Table 5. Selected health characteristics of births, by race and Hispanic origin of mother: United States, final 2014 and preliminary 2015**

[Data for 2015 are based on a continuous file of records received from the states. Figures for 2015 are based on weighted data rounded to the nearest individual]

Race and Hispanic origin of mother	Cesarean delivery				Preterm				Low birthweight			
	Total <sup>1</sup>		Low-risk <sup>2</sup>		Total <sup>3</sup>		Late <sup>4</sup>		Total <sup>5</sup>		Very low birthweight <sup>6</sup>	
	2015	2014	2015	2014	2015	2014	2015	2014	2015	2014	2015	2014
All races and origins <sup>7</sup>	32.0	32.2	25.7	26.0	9.62	9.57	6.87	6.82	8.07	8.00	1.39	1.40
Non-Hispanic white <sup>8</sup>	31.1	31.4	24.8	25.0	8.88	8.91	6.54	6.55	6.93	6.96	1.09	1.10
Non-Hispanic black <sup>8</sup>	35.5	35.6	29.7	29.9	13.39	13.23	8.57	8.47	13.33	13.17	2.88	2.87
American Indian or Alaska Native total <sup>8,9</sup>	28.3	28.5	22.2	21.9	10.51	10.22	7.70	7.48	7.51	7.65	1.26	1.27
Asian or Pacific Islander total <sup>8,9</sup>	33.0	33.2	27.5	27.5	8.63	8.45	6.40	6.27	8.40	8.05	1.13	1.15
Hispanic <sup>10</sup>	31.7	31.9	25.2	25.8	9.13	9.03	6.62	6.53	7.20	7.05	1.22	1.23

<sup>1</sup>All births by cesarean delivery per 100 live births.<sup>2</sup>Defined as singleton, term (37 weeks or more of gestation based on obstetric estimate; see Technical Notes), vertex (not breech) cesarean deliveries to women having a first birth per 100 women delivering singleton, term, vertex first births.<sup>3</sup>Born prior to 37 completed weeks of gestation based on the obstetric estimate; see Technical Notes.<sup>4</sup>Born between 34 and 36 completed weeks of gestation based on the obstetric estimate; see Technical Notes.<sup>5</sup>Birthweight of less than 2,500 grams (5 lb 8 oz).<sup>6</sup>Birthweight of less than 1,500 grams (3 lb 4 oz).<sup>7</sup>Includes births to race and origin groups not shown separately, such as white-Hispanic and black-Hispanic women, and births with origin not stated.<sup>8</sup>Race and Hispanic origin are reported separately on birth certificates. Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race. Race categories are consistent with the 1977 Office of Management and Budget (OMB) standards. Forty-nine states and the District of Columbia reported multiple-race data in 2015. The multiple-race data for these states were bridged to the single-race categories of the OMB standards for comparability with other states; see Technical Notes. Multiple-race reporting areas vary for 2014–2015; see Technical Notes.<sup>9</sup>Includes persons of Hispanic and non-Hispanic origin and origin not stated, according to the mother's reported race; see Technical Notes.<sup>10</sup>Includes all persons of Hispanic origin of any race; see Technical Notes.

NOTE: For information on the relative standard errors of the data and further discussion of random variation, see reference 6.

**Table 6. Distribution of births born preterm: United States, final 2007 and 2014 and preliminary 2015**

[Data for 2015 are based on a continuous file of records received from the states. Figures for 2015 are based on weighted data rounded to the nearest individual]

Gestational age (weeks) <sup>1</sup>	2015	2014	2007
		Percent	
Under 32	1.58	1.60	1.71
32–33	1.17	1.15	1.22
Total under 34	2.75	2.75	2.93
34–36	6.87	6.82	7.51
Total under 37	9.62	9.57	10.44

<sup>1</sup>Completed weeks of gestation based on the obstetric estimate; see Technical Notes.

NOTES: Preterm births are those born prior to 37 completed weeks of gestation. For information on the relative standard errors of the data and further discussion of random variation, see reference 6.

**Table 7. Total count of records and completeness of preliminary file of live births: United States and each state and territory, preliminary 2015**

[By place of occurrence. Data are based on a continuous file of records received from the states]

Area	Live births	
	Counts of records	Percent completeness
United States <sup>1</sup> . . . . .	3,969,359	99.533
Alabama . . . . .	58,007	100.000
Alaska . . . . .	11,160	100.000
Arizona . . . . .	86,390	100.000
Arkansas . . . . .	37,538	100.000
California . . . . .	492,284	99.956
Colorado . . . . .	67,109	100.000
Connecticut . . . . .	37,238	99.954
Delaware . . . . .	11,506	100.000
District of Columbia . . . . .	14,609	100.000
Florida . . . . .	224,522	100.000
Georgia . . . . .	132,635	100.000
Hawaii . . . . .	18,416	99.935
Idaho . . . . .	22,469	100.000
Illinois . . . . .	154,156	100.000
Indiana . . . . .	84,933	99.978
Iowa . . . . .	39,479	99.985
Kansas . . . . .	40,228	100.000
Kentucky . . . . .	53,373	99.811
Louisiana . . . . .	64,608	99.981
Maine . . . . .	12,382	99.992
Maryland . . . . .	70,300	100.000
Massachusetts . . . . .	72,077	100.000
Michigan . . . . .	111,845	99.418
Minnesota . . . . .	69,062	100.000
Mississippi . . . . .	37,580	100.000
Missouri . . . . .	76,122	99.926
Montana . . . . .	12,521	100.000
Nebraska . . . . .	27,110	100.000
Nevada . . . . .	35,924	100.000
New Hampshire . . . . .	12,476	100.000
New Jersey . . . . .	88,903	88.223
New Mexico . . . . .	24,048	98.155
New York . . . . .	237,800	99.997
New York excluding New York City . . . . .	116,227	99.995
New York City . . . . .	121,573	100.000
North Carolina . . . . .	122,642	100.000
North Dakota . . . . .	12,839	100.000
Ohio . . . . .	140,014	100.000
Oklahoma . . . . .	51,834	99.981
Oregon . . . . .	46,016	99.972
Pennsylvania . . . . .	139,899	99.256
Rhode Island . . . . .	11,524	100.000
South Carolina . . . . .	54,734	99.991
South Dakota . . . . .	12,963	100.000
Tennessee . . . . .	83,171	95.431
Texas . . . . .	412,382	99.988
Utah . . . . .	51,721	99.996
Vermont . . . . .	5,720	100.000
Virginia . . . . .	102,110	99.990
Washington . . . . .	88,880	100.000
West Virginia . . . . .	20,326	99.608
Wisconsin . . . . .	66,669	100.000
Wyoming . . . . .	7,105	99.958
Puerto Rico . . . . .	31,204	99.534
Virgin Islands . . . . .	---	---
Guam . . . . .	2,968	88.045
American Samoa . . . . .	905	85.539
Northern Marianas . . . . .	866	84.902

--- Data not available.

<sup>1</sup>Excludes data for Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and Northern Marianas.

NOTE: Percent completeness = Number of records in preliminary file \* 100 / Count of records.

## Technical Notes

### Nature and sources of data

Preliminary data for 2015 are based on nearly all births for that year (99.53%) (Table 7), with levels for 27 states and the District of Columbia at 100%. Preliminary 2015 data are based on the continuous receipt and processing of statistical records through February 11, 2016, by the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS). NCHS receives the data from the state's vital registration systems through the Vital Statistics Cooperative Program. In this report, U.S. totals include only events occurring within the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Data for Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, and Northern Marianas are included in tables showing data by state, but are not included in U.S. totals (Tables 3 and 7, and see state-specific Internet tables at [http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr65/nvsr65\\_03\\_tables.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr65/nvsr65_03_tables.pdf)). Data for the Virgin Islands were not available as of the release of the 2015 preliminary file. Accordingly, data for this territory are not included in this report. (NOTE: For releases of preliminary birth data prior to 2014, a criterion of at least 75% of a state's records for the year was used (6). Starting with the release of the 2014 preliminary birth data, a criterion of at least 85% of a state's records for the year was used.) Detailed information on reporting completeness and imputation procedures may be found in "User Guide to the 2014 Natality Public Use File" (7).

To produce the preliminary estimates shown in this report, records in the file were weighted using independent control counts of all 2014 births by state of occurrence. Detailed information on weighting and the reliability of estimates is also available elsewhere (6).

### 1989 and 2003 U.S. Standard Certificates of Live Birth

This report includes selected 2015 data on items that are collected on both the 1989 revision of the U.S. Standard Certificate of Live Birth (unrevised) and the 2003 revision of the U.S. Standard Certificate of Live Birth (revised). The 2003 revision is described in detail elsewhere (2,7–9). Forty-eight states (Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming); the District of Columbia; Guam; Puerto Rico; and Northern Marianas had implemented the revised birth certificate as of January 1, 2015. One additional state, New Jersey, which implemented the revised birth certificate starting in 2014, but after January 1 (in July) and only for selected facilities, had not completed the implementation of the revised birth certificate as of January 1, 2015. The 48 revised states and the District of Columbia that implemented the revision as of January 1, 2015, represent 96.5% of all births in 2015.

Data items exclusive to either the 1989 or the 2003 birth certificate revisions are not shown in this report. A forthcoming report and data release based on 2015 final data will present selected data exclusive to the 2003 revised certificate.

### Age of mother

For information on and discussion of age of mother, see "User Guide to the 2014 Natality Public Use File" (7).

### Hispanic origin and race

#### Hispanic origin

Hispanic origin and race are reported separately on the birth certificate. Data shown by race (i.e., American Indian or Alaska Native and Asian or Pacific Islander) include persons of Hispanic or non-Hispanic origin, and data for Hispanic origin include all persons of Hispanic origin of any race. Data for non-Hispanic persons are shown separately for white mothers and black mothers, given the substantial differences in fertility and maternal and infant health characteristics between Hispanic and non-Hispanic white women and Hispanic and non-Hispanic black women. Items asking for the Hispanic origin of the mother have been included on the birth certificates of all states and the District of Columbia, the Virgin Islands, and Guam since 1993, on the birth certificate of Puerto Rico starting in 2005, and on the birth certificate of Northern Marianas starting in 2010 (7). American Samoa does not collect this information.

#### Single, multiple, and "bridged" race

The 2003 revision of the U.S. Standard Certificate of Live Birth allows the reporting of more than one race (multiple races) for each parent (8), in accordance with the revised standards issued by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) in 1997 (10). Information on this change is presented elsewhere (8,11–14).

In 2015, the multiple-race reporting areas were the 48 fully revised states (see "1989 and 2003 U.S. Standard Certificates of Live Birth" section above) and the District of Columbia, as well as New Jersey, which was not fully revised as of January 1, 2015. Puerto Rico, which revised its birth certificate in 2005, began to report race according to the 2003 revision in 2015. The 49 states and the District of Columbia accounted for 99.1% of U.S. births in 2015. Data from the vital records of the remaining 2 areas, Connecticut (which has not implemented the revised birth certificate) and unrevised parts of New Jersey, are based on the 1989 revision of the certificate that follows the 1977 OMB standard, allowing only a single race to be reported (11,12).

To provide uniformity and comparability of the data during the transition period, before all or most of the data are available in the new multiple-race format, it was necessary to "bridge" the responses of those who reported more than one race (multiple races) to one single race. The bridging procedure for multiple-race mothers and fathers is based on the procedure used to bridge the multiple-race population estimates (12–14). Information detailing the processing and tabulation of data by race is presented elsewhere (7). A previous report describes multiple-race birth data for 2003 (15).

#### Marital status

For information on and discussion of marital status, see "User Guide to the 2014 Natality Public Use File" (7).

## Method of delivery, gestation, and birthweight

For information on and discussion of method of delivery and birthweight, see “User Guide to the 2014 Natality Public Use File” (7).

Beginning with the 2014 data year, NCHS transitioned to a new standard for estimating the gestational age of the newborn. The new measure—the obstetric estimate of gestation at delivery (OE)—replaces the measure based on the date of the last normal menses (LMP) (3). Accordingly, gestational age data shown in this report are based on the OE. However, LMP-based data are also available for all relevant report tables from: [http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr65/nvsr65\\_03\\_tables.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr65/nvsr65_03_tables.pdf). National data based on OE data are available only from data year 2007 forward. Gestational age estimates differ somewhat between the OE- and LMP-based measures. For example, the 2015 OE-based preterm birth rate for the United States is 9.62%, compared with the LMP-based rate of 11.29%. In general, both measures show similar trends in the rate of preterm birth from 2007 to 2014. Information on and discussion of the reasons for the change, and a detailed comparison of the two measures, are presented elsewhere (3).

## Population denominators

U.S. national birth and fertility rates for 2015 shown in this report are based on population estimates derived from the 2010 census as of July 1, 2015 (16).

Information on the national estimates of births to unmarried women (i.e., methods of determining marital status) and the computation of preliminary birth rates for unmarried women is presented elsewhere (2,7,17). The birth rate for unmarried women for 2015 is estimated based on the population distributions by marital status, derived from the 2015 March (Annual Social and Economic) Supplement of the U.S. Census Bureau, and applied to the national population estimates as of July 1, 2015, which are derived from the 2010 census (16–18).

Postcensal population estimates by age, sex, and race and Hispanic origin for 2015 at the national and state levels were not available as of the preparation of this report. Accordingly, birth and fertility rates by race and Hispanic origin and fertility rates by state could not be shown in this report. These rates will be shown in the 2015 final birth report.

## Computing rates and percentages and reliability of estimates

For information on and further discussion of computing rates and percentages and the relative standard errors of the data, see “Births: Preliminary Data for 2005” (6).

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**Contents**

Abstract . . . . .	1
Introduction . . . . .	2
Results . . . . .	2
Births and birth rates . . . . .	2
Maternal and infant health characteristics . . . . .	4
References . . . . .	5
List of Detailed Tables . . . . .	5
List of Internet Tables . . . . .	5
Technical Notes . . . . .	13

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