

# Facts about Preterm Birth

Preterm births are those that occur prior to 37 completed weeks of pregnancy. They are classified as moderately preterm (32-36 weeks) and very preterm (less than 32 weeks). A variety of complications can occur with preterm births, and preterm infants are considered to be at higher risk for developmental delays.

According to the March of Dimes, approximately 1 in 9 babies were born preterm in Georgia in 2018.

## Risk Factors for Preterm Birth

**Previous Birth History:** Women with a history of previous preterm births are more likely to experience another.

**Plurality:** Multiple births were 7 times more likely than singleton births to be born very preterm in Georgia.

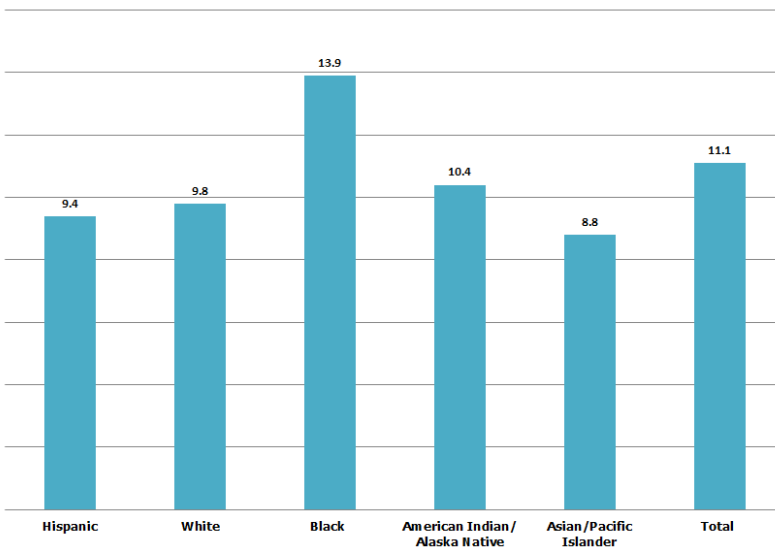
**Reproductive Complications:** Previous or current problems with your uterus, vagina, or cervix may increase risk for a preterm birth.

## Demographic Factors

**Maternal Age:** Mothers who are older (over 40) and very young (under 20) have the highest rates of very preterm births in Georgia.

**Race/Ethnicity:** The 2017 preterm birth rate among non-Hispanic black infants remains the highest of all racial groups at 13.9 percent.

Percentages of Preterm Birth by Race/ Ethnicity  
2015 -2017



## Health Related Factors

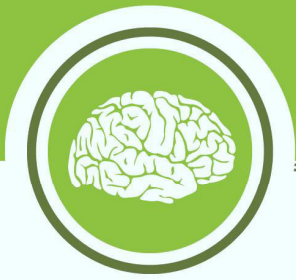
There are many health related factors that mothers may experience before and during pregnancy that can increase the chance of having a preterm birth.

### Before Pregnancy:

- Being overweight or underweight
- Family history of preterm births
- Short time period between pregnancies

### During Pregnancy:

- Vaginal infections, including urinary tract infections (UTI) and sexually transmitted infections (STI)
- Diabetes
- High blood pressure
- Clotting disorders (thrombophilia)
- Bleeding from the vagina
- Certain birth defects in the baby
- Being pregnant with a single fetus after in vitro fertilization (IVF)
- Being underweight before pregnancy
- Obesity



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## Health Risks for Preterm Babies

Preterm babies may face a variety of health problems related to their underdevelopment.

Including:

- Breathing Problems
- Heart Problems
- Digestive Problems
- Vision Problems
- Anemia

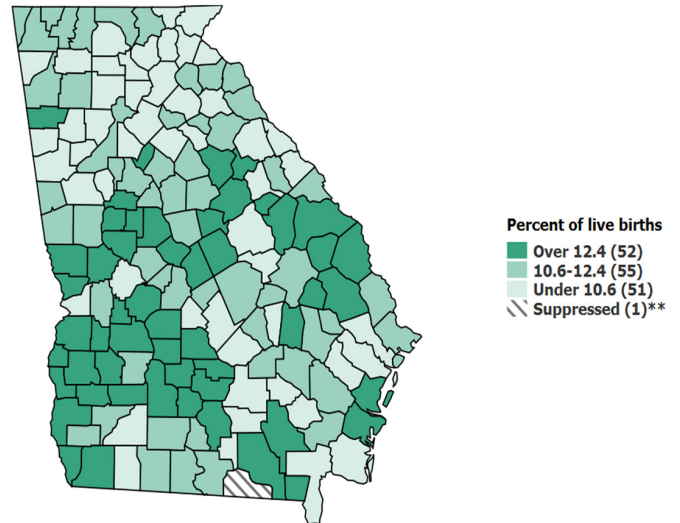
## Reducing Your Risk

While some risk factors related to preterm birth are based on medical history and genetics, there are many lifestyle changes that you can make when you are expecting.

- Take steps to get healthy before becoming pregnant, establish a plan to manage weight, stress levels, and chronic illnesses
- Seek prenatal care from a healthcare provider
- Avoid using tobacco products, drinking alcohol, using illegal substances and misusing prescription drugs
- Talk to your health care provider about any medications that you may be taking before getting pregnant
- Wait at least 18 months after giving birth before trying to get pregnant again

## Preterm Births in Georgia

2014 – 2017



## Resources

To learn more information, please visit the following websites:

- Georgia Department of Public Health: Women's Health ([dph.georgia.gov/womens-health](http://dph.georgia.gov/womens-health))
- March of Dimes ([marchofdimes.org](http://marchofdimes.org))
- CDC ([cdc.gov/reproductivehealth](http://cdc.gov/reproductivehealth))
- Georgia Family Health Line: 1-800-300-9003
- MotherToBaby Georgia ([mothertobaby.org](http://mothertobaby.org))