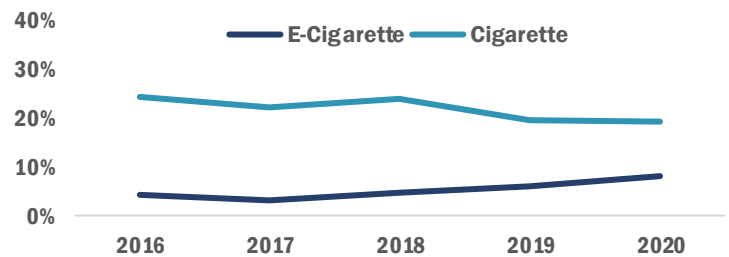


The Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS) is a survey of women who recently gave birth that asks about their experiences, behaviors, and healthcare utilization before, during and shortly after their pregnancy. Women receive the survey two to six months after giving birth. Vermont has participated in PRAMS since 2001. This report presents highlights for 2020 Vermont births, organized by topic area. Because COVID-19 impacted behaviors, experiences and healthcare utilization during the 2020 data year, supplemental questions were added to the survey during the second half of the year asking specifically about COVID related experiences.

Tobacco Use, E-Cigarettes, and Smoking Cessation

- Two in ten (19%) women smoked cigarettes in the three months prior to pregnancy.
 - 82% of women who had a health care visit in the 12 months before pregnancy were asked if they smoke cigarettes.
- One in ten (11%) smoked cigarettes during their last trimester, meaning that 40% of those smoking before pregnancy quit before the last three months.
- About one third (35%) of women who quit smoking during pregnancy had resumed smoking by the time of the survey.
- 12% of women used e-cigarettes in the previous two years.
 - 8% of women used e-cigarettes in the three months before pregnancy, significantly higher than years 2016-2019 (4%).
 - 3% of women used e-cigarettes in the last three months of pregnancy.

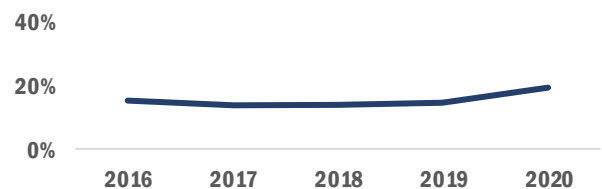
Cigarette and E-Cigarette Use in 3 Months Before Pregnancy



- More than three-quarters (78%) of smokers used at least one strategy to quit smoking during pregnancy. The most popular strategies were:

- Tried to do it on their own (e.g., cold turkey): 68%
- Set a specific date to quit smoking: 31%
- Switched to e-cigarettes: 19%
- Used a nicotine patch, gum, lozenge, spray, or inhaler: 16%
- About 10% used each of the following:

Quit Smoking Method: Switched to e-Cigarettes

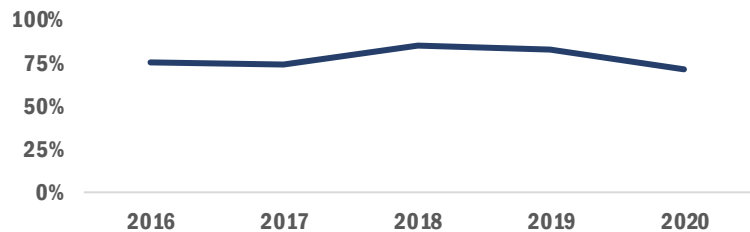


used the internet; called a quit line like 802Quits or visited a national, or state website; used booklets or videos.

Smoking Cessation, continued

- Seven in ten (71%) smokers said a doctor, nurse, or other health care worker advised them to quit smoking during a prenatal visit. Actions and recommendations on the part of health care workers included:
 - 53% of smokers discussed with a health care worker how to quit smoking.
 - Up to one-half of smokers had a health care worker refer them to a quit line (e.g., 802Quits); provide them with booklets, videos, or other materials to help them quit on their own; ask if a family member or friend would support their decision to quit; suggest that they set a date by which to stop smoking.
 - Up to one-third of smokers had a health care worker recommend a nicotine patch or nicotine gum or suggest that they attend a class or program to stop smoking.
 - 18% of smokers were referred to counseling to help with quitting, and 7% were prescribed a nicotine spray or inhaler.

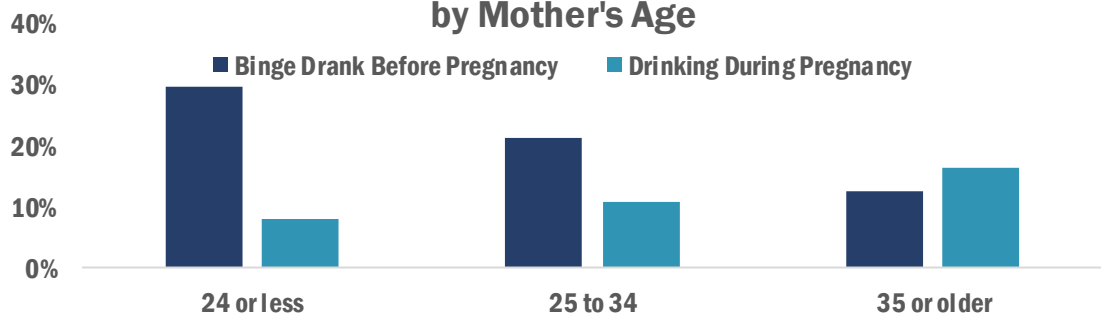
Smokers Whose Doctor Recommended Quitting Smoking



Alcohol Use

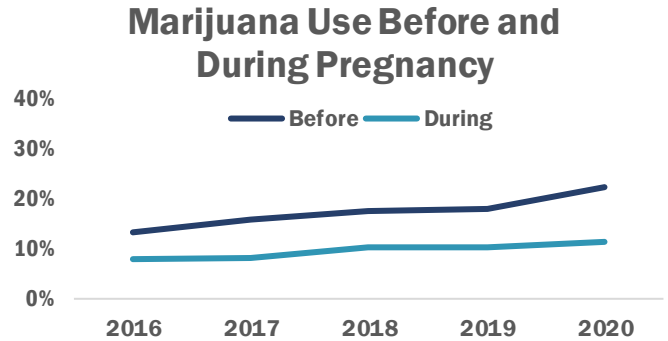
- 71% of women drank alcohol during the three months before pregnancy.
 - 9% drank more than one drink per day before pregnancy.
- One in five (21%) had at least one drinking binge (four or more drinks during a two-hour span), during the three months before pregnancy. Women in younger age groups were more likely to binge drink in the months leading up to pregnancy.
- 11% drank alcohol during pregnancy. Mothers 35 and older were more likely to drink while pregnant.
 - 96% of women with a prenatal care visit were asked about their alcohol use.
 - 85% of women who drank during the three months before pregnancy were advised not to drink during pregnancy during a prenatal care visit.

Alcohol Use Before and During Pregnancy by Mother's Age



Other Substance Use

- 25% of women reported using a substance other than tobacco or alcohol during *the month before pregnancy*¹.
 - The most reported substance was marijuana 22% of women reported use of marijuana in the month before pregnancy, which has significantly increased since 2016 (13%).
 - 4% used Adderall®, Ritalin® or similar stimulants.
 - 2% used of cocaine, and 1% used prescription pain relievers.
 - Heroin, synthetic marijuana, and amphetamine use were also reported, but the number of respondents is too small to report.
- 14% of women reported the use of a substance other than alcohol or tobacco *during pregnancy*.
 - Marijuana was the most reported substance during pregnancy (11%).
 - 2% reported the use of Adderall®, Ritalin® or similar stimulants, and 1% of prescription pain relievers.
 - Heroin use, cocaine use, synthetic marijuana use, and amphetamine use were also reported, but there were too few respondents to provide an estimate.
 - Nearly nine in ten (87%) of women with a prenatal care visit were asked about their use of drugs such as marijuana, cocaine, crack, or meth.

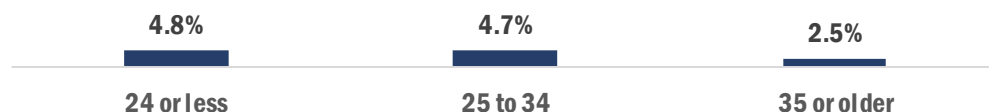


“... I want to tell moms in recovery to keep up the good work, and it was such a huge relief to be the person being able to say no [to prescription pain meds] at the hospital.”

Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT)

- Few women (4%) used methadone, Suboxone®, or another maintenance treatment drug during the 12 months before pregnancy.
- Similar proportions received MAT during pregnancy (5%) and after their baby was born (4%).
- Pregnant women under 35 were more likely to use MAT.

MAT Use During Pregnancy by Mother's Age, 2016-2020

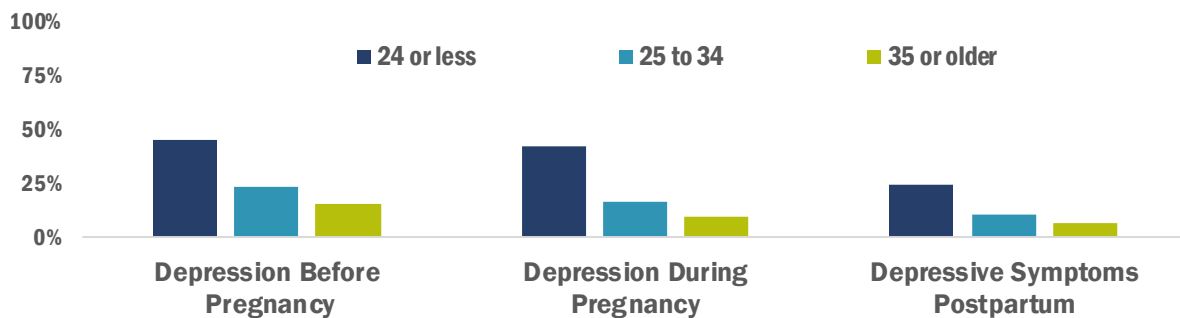


¹The PRAMS questionnaire does not ask whether any drug or medication use is per prescription.

Mental Health

- A quarter (25%) of women had depression at some point during the three months before pregnancy.
 - 19% had a health care visit for depression or anxiety in the year before pregnancy.
- One in five (20%) reported depression at some point during pregnancy.
 - 91% 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.

Maternal Age and Depression by Mother's Age, 2020

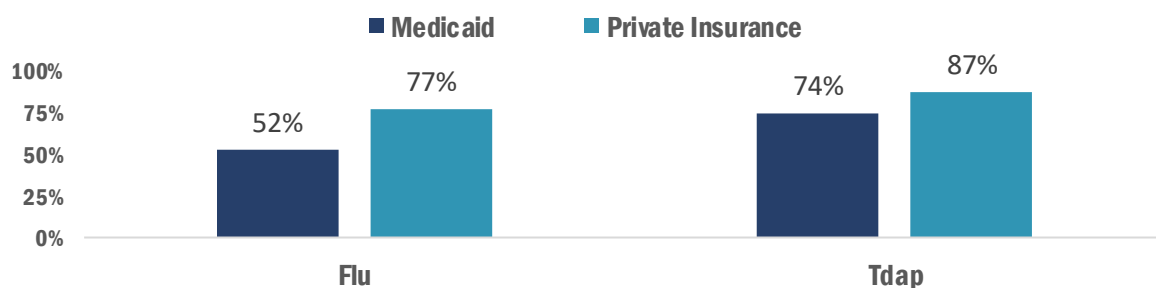


“My partner lost his dad during covid to a random heart attack. [Hospital] offered me mental health services and they said it was a VT grant funded program. This was super helpful and really appreciated because I otherwise would not be able to afford it. “

Immunization

- Eight in ten (81%) women got a Tdap vaccination during pregnancy.
- 67% got a flu shot in the 12 months before giving birth.
 - Receipt of the flu shot was significantly lower among women under 25 compared with those 25 and older (52% vs. 70%).
- Women enrolled in Medicaid during their pregnancies were less likely to get immunized.

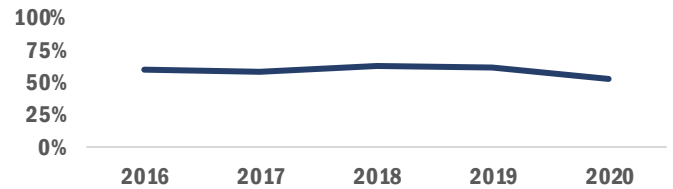
Immunization by Delivery Payer



Oral Health

- About half (53%) of women had a teeth cleaning during pregnancy, significantly lower than in years 2016-2019 (59%-63%).
 - Women whose deliveries were covered by Medicaid were less likely to have a teeth cleaning than those with deliveries covered by private insurance (41% to 61%).
- Nine in ten women knew it was important to care for their teeth and gums during pregnancy.
- About half of women (46%) 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.
 - Women who discussed the health of their teeth and gums with a prenatal health care provider were significantly more likely to have a teeth cleaning during pregnancy than those who did not (60% versus 47%).
- 29% of women who received prenatal care had a doctor, nurse, or other health care worker suggest that they go see a dentist.
- 18% needed to see a dentist for a problem during their pregnancy; of those needing a visit, 28% did not see a dentist or a dental clinic about a problem.

Women with Teeth Cleaning during Pregnancy



“The people who helped get my Medicaid also gave me a list of dentists who took Medicaid- and this was probably why I had such good dental care during pregnancy.”

Social Support

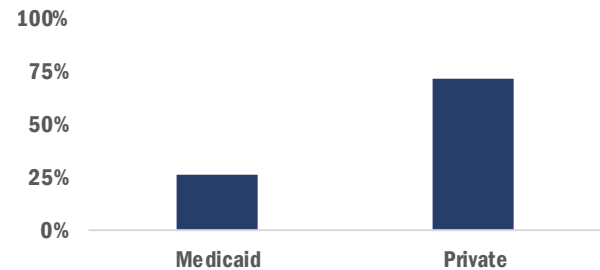
- These types of social support were each identified as available during pregnancy by 90-95% of *all* women: someone to talk with about her problems; someone to take her to the clinic or doctor’s office if she needed a ride; someone to help her if she were sick and needed to be in bed.
 - 84% had someone to lend her \$50.
 - 82% of women reported that they had all four types of support, while 5% reported having none of these sources of support.
- These types of social support were identified as available since giving birth by 90-95% of women *whose infants were living with them*: someone to loan her \$50; someone to help her if she were sick and needed to be in bed; someone to talk with about her problems; someone to take care of her baby; someone to help her if she were tired and feeling frustrated with her new baby.
 - 85% reported having all five types of support, and too few to provide an estimate reported having none of them.

“It is hard to not have as much support from family as if there was no pandemic.”

Work and Workplace Leave

- 82% of women worked during their pregnancies.
 - Of those who worked during their pregnancy, eight in ten were returning to work (i.e., had returned or planned to return to their jobs).
- About half (47%) of women returning to work did not have paid leave.
- Among women returning to work, those with private insurance were much more likely to have paid leave (72%) than those with Medicaid-insured (26%).
- The most common factors affecting leave time decisions were: the job didn't offer paid leave (40%); couldn't afford to take any further leave (36%); did not have enough leave time to take any or more time off (29%).
 - About two-thirds (64%) of women returning to work felt they had too little time off available after delivery.

Among Women Returning to Work, Had Any Paid Leave

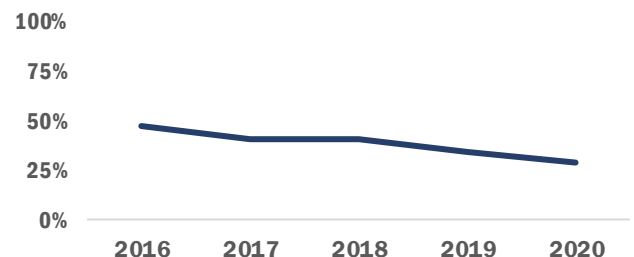


“I wish that I would have been able to receive paid family leave beyond 10 weeks so that I could stay home longer with my son. The physical and emotional healing from birth injuries took the majority of my leave.”

Sleep Environment

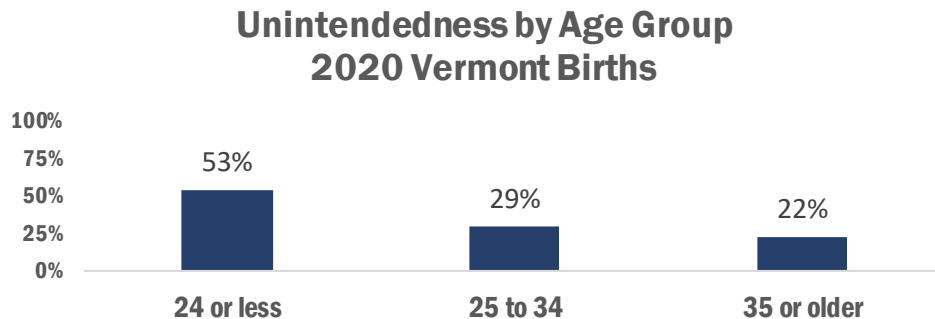
- 89% of mothers exclusively placed their infant to sleep on his or her back.
- Nearly all (98%) women had a doctor, nurse or other health care worker tell them to place their baby on her/his back to sleep.
 - 94% were told to place their baby to sleep in a crib, bassinet or pack and play.
 - 92% were told what things should/shouldn't go into bed with their baby.
 - 79% were told to place their baby's crib or bed in their room, a significant increase from previous years.
- 83% of infants always or often slept alone in their own cribs or beds.
 - 7% of infants sometimes slept alone, and 11% rarely or never slept alone.
- Three in ten (29%) infants usually slept with a blanket, a significantly lower percentage than in previous years (47% in 2016).
 - Less than ten percent usually slept with crib bumper pads (9%); on a couch, sofa, or armchair (6%); and with toys, cushions, or pillows (5%).

Infants Sleeping with Blankets



Preconception Health & Family Planning

- A third (32%) of births resulted from unintended pregnancies². Women in younger age groups, particularly those under the age of 25, were significantly more likely to give birth following an unintended pregnancy.



- Three-quarters (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.
 - 75% were asked if someone was hurting them emotionally or physically.
 - 75% were asked if they were feeling down or depressed.
 - 51% were asked whether they wanted to have children.
 - 45% had a talk about using birth control.
 - 40% were told to take a vitamin with folic acid.
 - 37% discussed maintaining a healthy weight.
 - 30% had a talk about improving health before a pregnancy.
 - 27% had a talk about STIs.
 - 21% were tested for HIV.
- About one third (30%) of women talked to a doctor, nurse, or other health care workers about preparing for a pregnancy. Topics included:
 - 60% - getting their vaccines updated before pregnancy.
 - 59% - the safety of medicines during pregnancy.
 - 48% - how drinking during pregnancy can affect a baby.
 - 47% - how smoking during pregnancy can affect a baby.
 - 44% - visiting a dentist/dental hygienist before pregnancy.
 - 42% - how illegal drugs during pregnancy can affect a baby.
 - 32% - counseling or treatment for depression or anxiety.
 - 30% - counseling for genetic diseases.

² This is not the same as the “unintended pregnancy rate,” which also includes pregnancies not ending in a live birth.

Vehicle Safety

- When riding in a car, truck, or van, nearly all (98%) infants always rode in an infant car seat. Two percent often, sometimes, or rarely rode in an infant car seat.
- Nearly all women knew that new babies should be in rear-facing car seats and that car seats should not be placed in front of an air bag.
- Ways in which women got their new baby's car seats included:
 - 48% bought a seat new.
 - 28% received it new as a gift.
 - 20% already had a seat for another baby.
 - Fewer than 10% chose one of these options: borrowed a car seat from a friend/family; bought a used seat; were given a seat by the hospital or by a community program; or wrote-in their answer.

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.
 - 91% were asked if they planned to use birth control after their babies were born.
 - 77% discussed with a health care worker the signs of preterm labor.
 - 25% of women who had a preterm birth did **not** have a conversation with a health care worker about the signs of preterm labor.
 - 60% were asked if they knew how much weight they should gain during pregnancy.
 - 50% were asked if they wanted to be tested for HIV.
 - 41% discussed seatbelt use during pregnancy with their provider, significantly lower than from 2016-2019 (46%-50%).

Talked About Seat Belt Use at Prenatal Care Visit



“I am fortunate to have access to resources that helped me, but wish I had more information on having a healthy postpartum period- the '4th trimester' needs more emphasis during prenatal care. I had so much to research and learn that I wish I had known to do before.”

- Nine in ten had a postpartum checkup. Of these women:
 - 92% talked about birth control methods with a health care worker.
 - 82% of women were trying to prevent another pregnancy.
 - 57% talked to a health care worker about how long to wait before another pregnancy.
 - 38% 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.
 - 57% had a health care worker talk to them about healthy eating, exercise, and losing weight gained during pregnancy.
 - 65% of those who smoked cigarettes before pregnancy were asked if they smoke cigarettes.

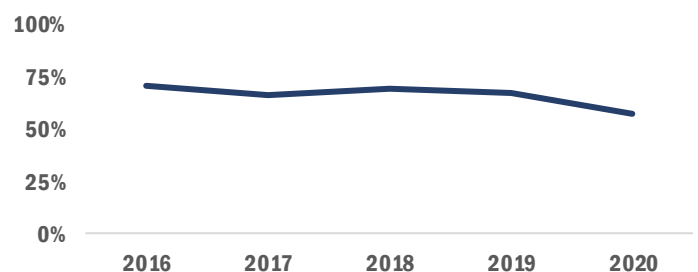
“Post-partum care has been challenging because of covid-19. For me, I haven't been able to access needed doctor's visits and my support network.”

Breastfeeding

- Nearly all (96%) women with a prenatal care visit were asked if they planned to breastfeed.
- 95% of mothers initiated breastfeeding.
 - Most, 86%, breastfed at least 4 weeks and 80% for at least 8 weeks.
- Each of the following breastfeeding-supportive hospital practices happened for 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 hospital practices happened for 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; mother was not provided a gift pack with formula.
- 86% of women who delivered low birthweight babies were provided with a breast pump by the hospital.
- 68% of women who gave birth in the hospital were provided a phone number for breastfeeding support, significantly lower than in years 2016-2018.
- 58% of babies who were breastfed at least once were not given a pacifier by hospital staff.
- A significantly lower percentage of mothers (57%) than in previous years were offered a class on breastfeeding (66% in 2019), and a significantly lower percentage (20%) of first-time mothers attended a breastfeeding class than in previous years (33% in 2019).

“Breastfeeding classes weren't happening because of COVID. I wanted to breastfeed my baby for as long as he wanted but I wasn't able to.”

Offered a Breastfeeding Class

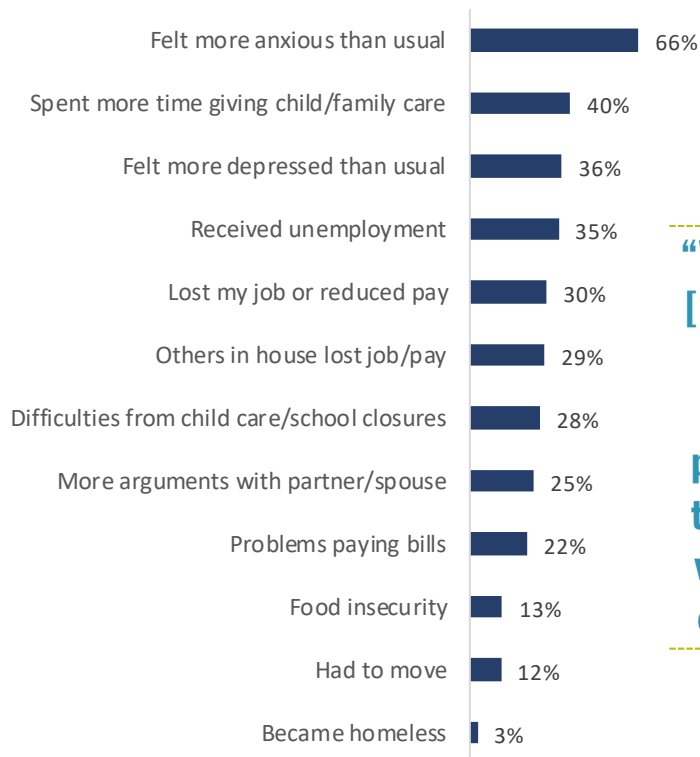


COVID- 19

Vermont PRAMS added a COVID-19 supplement during data collection for 2020 births, beginning with births in July 2020, allowing for a half-year of data on COVID. Findings for this period reflect a time when vaccines were not available for this population.

- Over half (59%) of mothers had a combination of virtual and in-person prenatal care visits, while 38% had only in-person visits.
 - For postpartum visits, about half (53%) were exclusively in person, 31% were a combination of virtual and in-person, and 11% only virtual.
- Less than half (46%) of women were unable to stay at home during pregnancy due to a job or other responsibilities.
- Two-thirds (66%) reported increased anxiety due to the pandemic, and three in ten (30%) reported pandemic-related job loss. A quarter had an increase in conflict with their partner due to the pandemic, and 13% experienced pandemic-related food insecurity.

Experiences Due to COVID-19 Pandemic



“We have fewer people who could [help] due to Covid. Some family members who would watch our kids are not taking proper precautions so we are not using them for support, and my family who do take Covid seriously are essential healthcare workers.”

Data notes: If a given question response received fewer than ten answers, or fewer than 30 respondents answered a question, no estimate is provided for the the question. 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.

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