



# 2023 Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS) Highlights

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## Introduction

The Pregnancy Risk Management Monitoring System (PRAMS) is a survey of women who recently gave birth. It 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 2023 Vermont births, organized by topic area from the [Phase 9 survey](#).

If you need help accessing or understanding this information, contact VT PRAMS Program at [AHS.VDHVTPRAMS@vermont.gov](mailto:AHS.VDHVTPRAMS@vermont.gov)

## Tobacco Use, Smoking Cessation, and E-Cigarettes

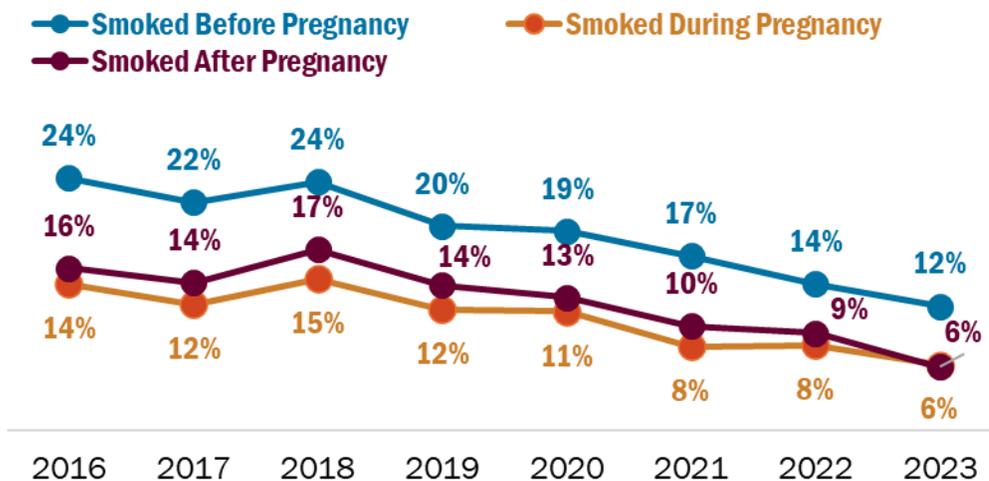
### Tobacco use

Eighty percent of women who had a health care visit in the 12 months before pregnancy were asked if they smoke cigarettes.

One in eight (12%) women smoked cigarettes in the three months prior to pregnancy.

- Four out of nine (44%) women who smoked in the three months prior to pregnancy quit smoking cigarettes by their last trimester.
- About one fifth (22%) of women who quit smoking during pregnancy resumed smoking by the time of the survey (3 to 6 months after baby's birth).

### The smoking rate has been decreasing before, during and after pregnancy since 2016

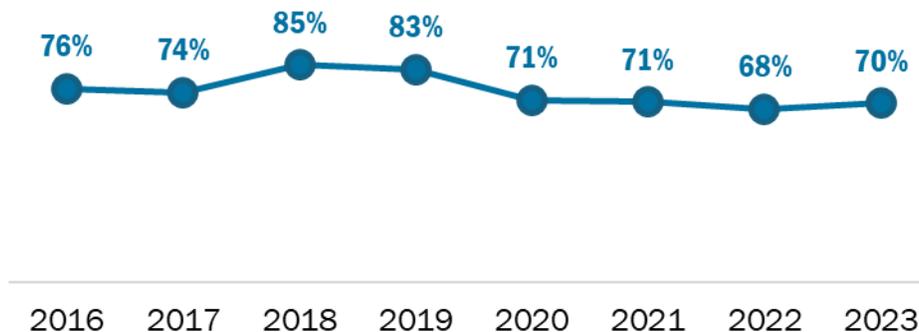


## Smoking Cessation

Seven in ten (70%) smokers said a doctor, nurse, or other health care worker advised them to quit smoking during a prenatal visit. Actions and recommendations by health care workers included:

- 44% of smokers discussed with a health care worker how to quit smoking.
- Two in five (40%) smokers had a health care worker referred them to a quit line (e.g., 802Quits).
- About one-third of smokers had a health care worker recommend a nicotine patch or nicotine gum or were referred to books or videos to help them stop smoking.
- More than one in four smokers had a health care worker recommend nicotine lozenges, suggest a class to help quit, or set a specific date to quit.
- 10% were prescribed a nicotine spray or inhaler.
- About one in five (22%) smokers were referred to counseling to help with quitting.

### Percent of smokers whose doctor recommended quitting smoking



More than three-quarters (76%) 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): 59%
- Set a specific date to quit smoking: 38%
- Used a nicotine patch, gum, lozenge, spray, or inhaler: 14%
- Called a quit line like 802Quits: 10%

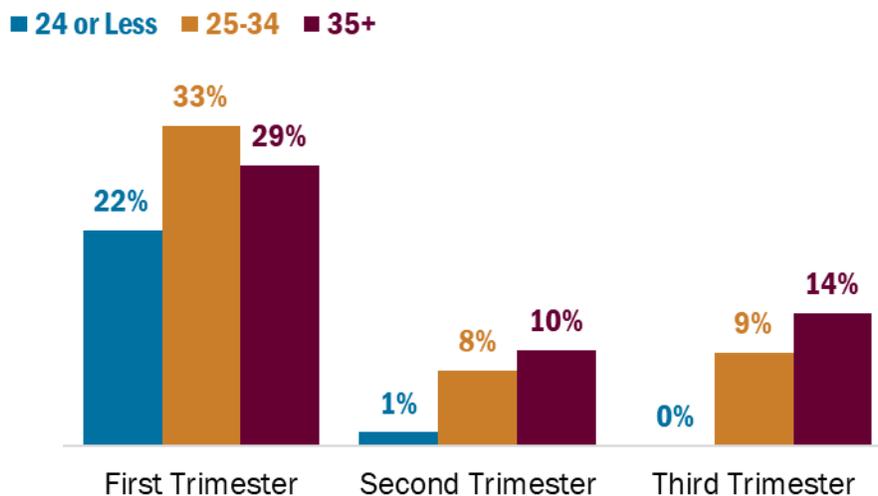
## E-Cigarettes

Twelve percent of women used e-cigarettes in two years prior to completing the survey while 10% did so in the 3 months before pregnancy. E-cigarette use dropped to 3% in the last 3 months of pregnancy. Nine percent reported using in the past 2 years to cut down or stop smoking cigarettes in the past 2 years.

## Alcohol Use

Thirty percent of women drank alcohol during the first three months of pregnancy, including the time before they knew they were pregnant. Fewer women drink during the second and third trimesters (on average 11%). It's notable that women 35 and older are more likely to drink after the first semester.

### Drinking during pregnancy by age and trimester



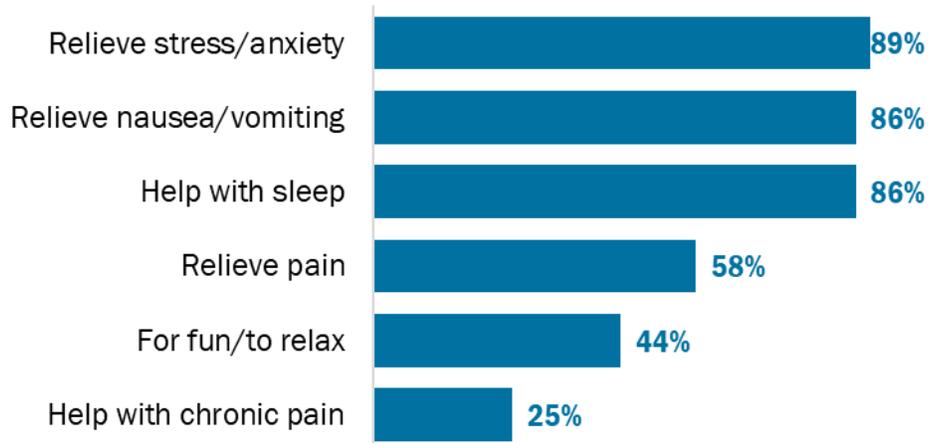
Five percent of pregnant women binge drank at least once (four or more drinks during a two-hour span) during their first trimester, including the time before knowing they were pregnant.

- Women in younger age groups were more likely to binge drink early in pregnancy (7%).

## Marijuana and Other Substance Use

About one in five women reported using marijuana before pregnancy, and 12% say they used it during pregnancy. Five percent of pregnant women also reported using some type of CBD product while pregnant. Use of heroin, synthetic marijuana, amphetamines, and other substances was also reported, but the number of respondents is too small to report on ( $\leq 1\%$ ).

### Reasons for using marijuana during pregnancy

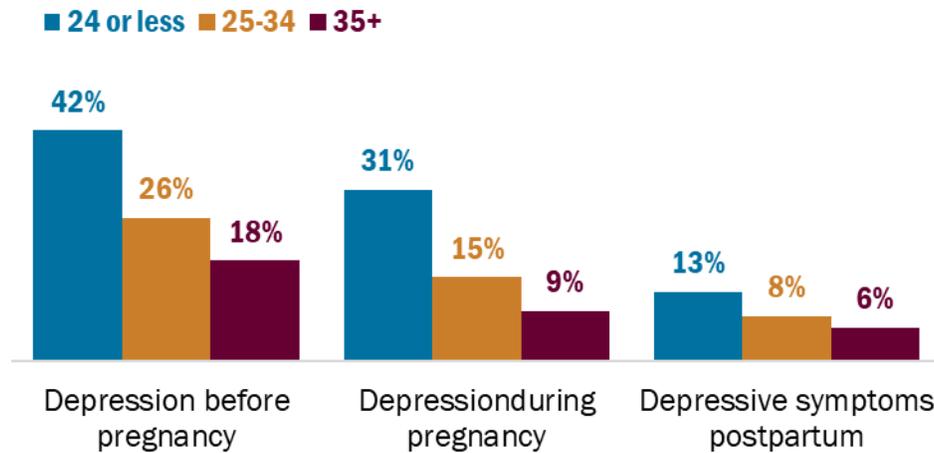


## Mental Health

Women are routinely screened for depression and/or anxiety during and after pregnancy. Eighty-seven percent were screened during pregnancy and 89% were screened after pregnancy.

One in six (16%) were diagnosed with depression and one in four (24%) were diagnosed with anxiety at some point during pregnancy. Eight percent of mothers had symptoms indicating a risk for postpartum depression and 21% reported postpartum anxiety symptoms.

## Maternal depression is highest pre-pregnancy and among women younger than 25 years old



Thirty-four percent of mothers felt they needed mental health services after their baby was born. Of those 80% were able to get the mental health services they needed. Among those who didn't receive services the most frequent reason given was that they didn't have time because of a job, childcare or other commitments.

## Stressors

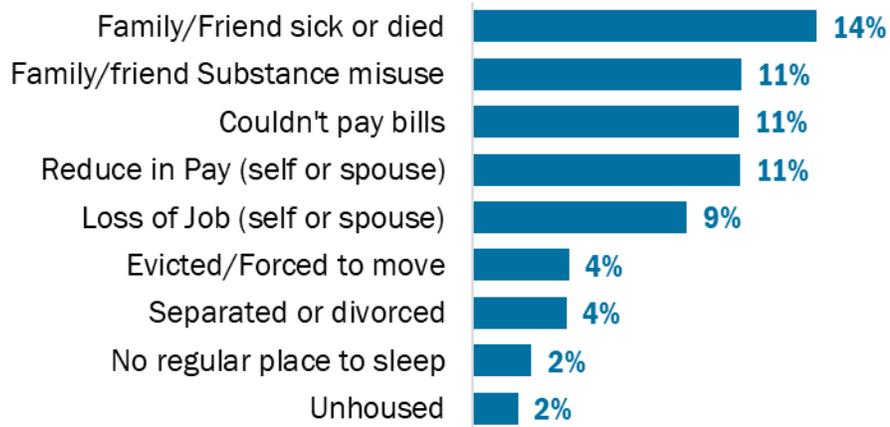
Food insecurity impacted 8% of mothers.

- 6% of them reported that sometimes food ran out before they had money to buy more.
- 2% reported that food always ran out before they had money to buy more.

Transportation issues impacted 6% of respondents.

- 4% reported that not having transportation kept them from medical and non-medical appointments, or work.
- 5% reported that lack of transportation kept them from doing errands.

## Stress-related events mothers experienced during 12 months before delivery

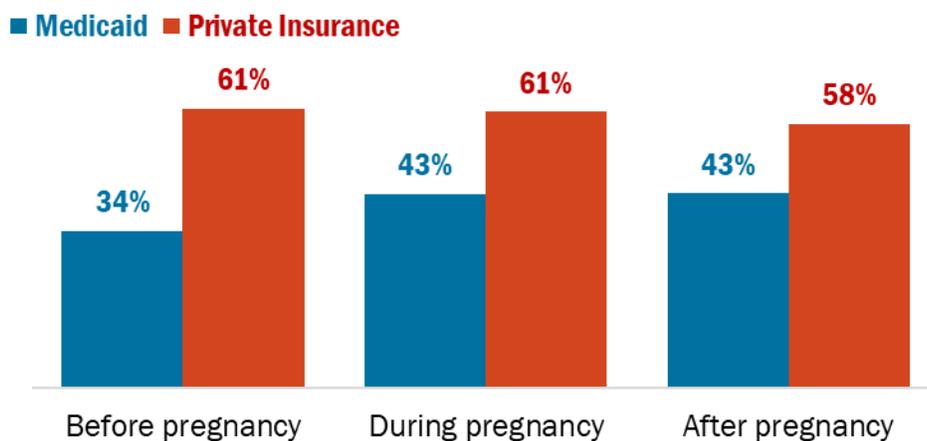


## Insurance and Income

Three in five women had private health insurance, either through an employer or other payment source, before (62%), during (61%) and after pregnancy (59%).

Nineteen percent of women lived below the Federal Poverty Line (FPL) during the year before their baby was born, and 21% lived between 100% and 200% of FPL during the same period.

## Medicaid utilization is higher during and after pregnancy than before pregnancy

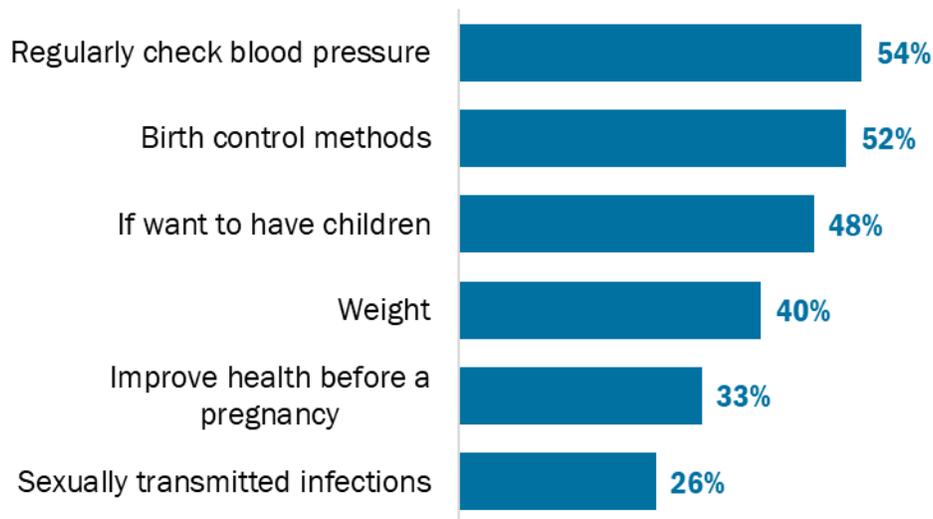


## Preconception Health

More than nine in ten (92%) of women had one or more visits to a health care provider during the *12 months before pregnancy*.

- 66% had a check-up with a family doctor.
- 66% had their teeth cleaned.
- 59% had a check-up with an OB/GYN.
- 26% had a visit for depression or anxiety.
- 25% had a visit for family planning or birth control.
- 25% went to an emergency room or urgent care facility.
- 22% had a visit for an illness, injury or chronic health condition.

### Topics a health care provider talked to mothers about during a visit a year prior to pregnancy included:



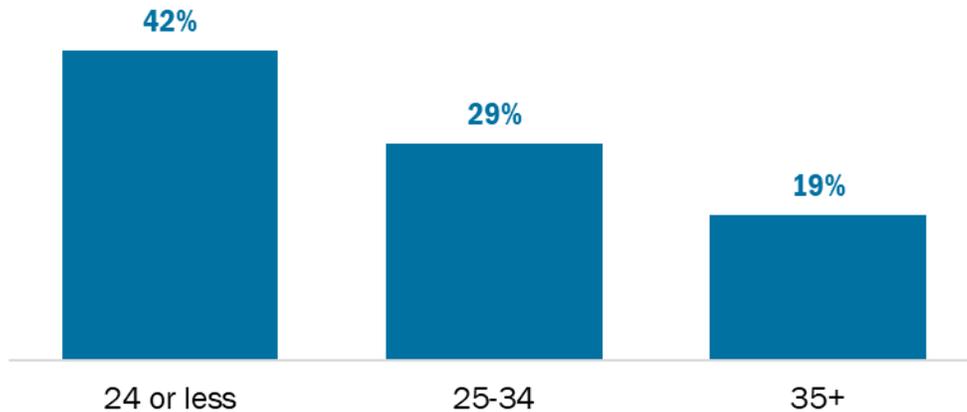
During the year prior to pregnancy women were screened for the following:

- 80% were asked by a health care worker if they smoked, vaped or used other tobacco products.
- 74% were asked if they were feeling depressed or anxious.
- 72% were asked if someone was hurting them physically or emotionally.

## Family Planning

Most births in 2023 were planned pregnancies. Twenty-eight percent of births were unintended, and the rate of unintended births varies by age with most occurring to mothers younger than 25 years old.

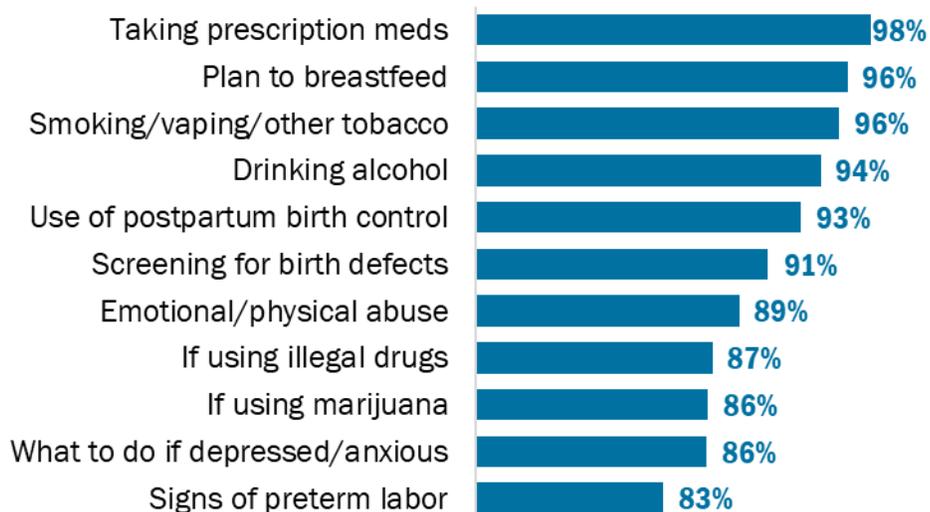
### Women in younger age groups were significantly more likely to give birth following an unintended pregnancy



## Prenatal Care

Nearly all women (97%) had at least one prenatal care visit. A wide variety of topics were discussed at these visits.

### Among women who had a prenatal care visit, they were asked about 2:



Certain health conditions can develop during pregnancy: 11% of women reported that they had diabetes and 17% reported high blood pressure that started during pregnancy.

Twenty-nine percent of women were enrolled in WIC during pregnancy.<sup>3</sup>

## Immunization

Tdap, flu, and COVID-19 vaccines were offered to most women by health care providers during the year before their pregnancy:

- 87% were offered a flu vaccine.
- 84 % were offered the Tdap vaccine.
- 76% were offered a COVID-19 vaccine.

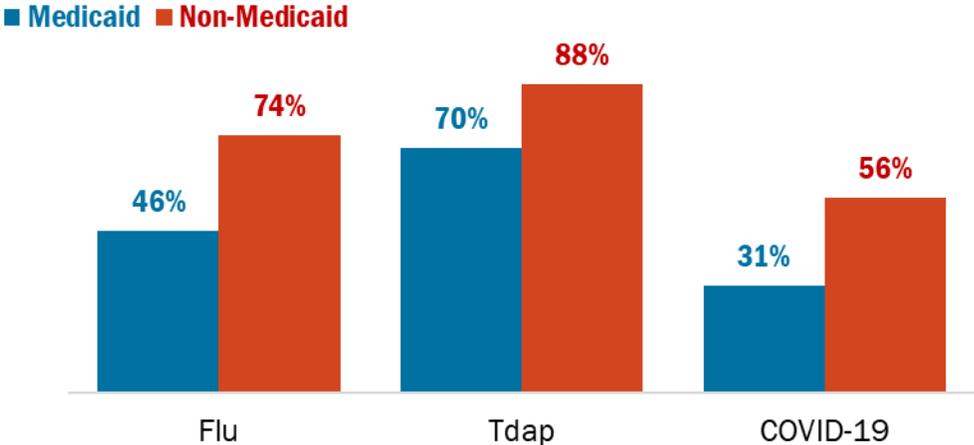
COVID-19 vaccination was the highest during the 3 months before pregnancy:

- 27% received a COVID-19 vaccine before pregnancy.
- 15% received a flu vaccine before pregnancy.
- 5% received the Tdap vaccine before pregnancy.

Most pregnant mothers got their Tdap vaccination during pregnancy:

- 77% received the Tdap vaccine during pregnancy.
- 51% received a flu vaccine during pregnancy.
- 23% received a COVID-19 vaccine during pregnancy.

### Overall vaccination use before and during pregnancy was lower for women on Medicaid



## Infants

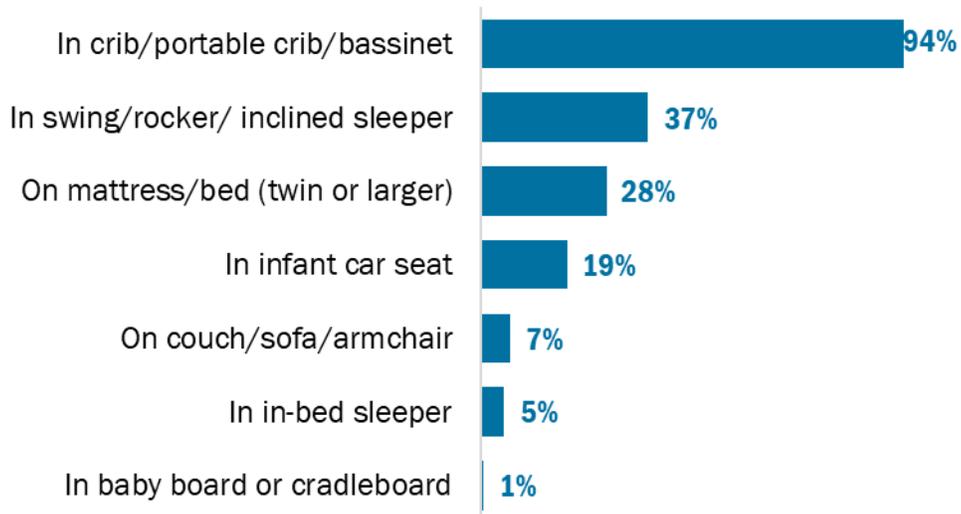
### Sleep Environment

Eighty-one percent of mothers exclusively placed their infant to sleep on their backs during the two weeks before taking the survey.

Eighty percent of infants always or often slept alone in their crib or bed.

During the two weeks before taking the survey, 87% of moms reported their infants had their crib or bed in a room with mom or another adult.

#### During the two weeks prior to the survey, infants were placed to sleep at night or for naps:



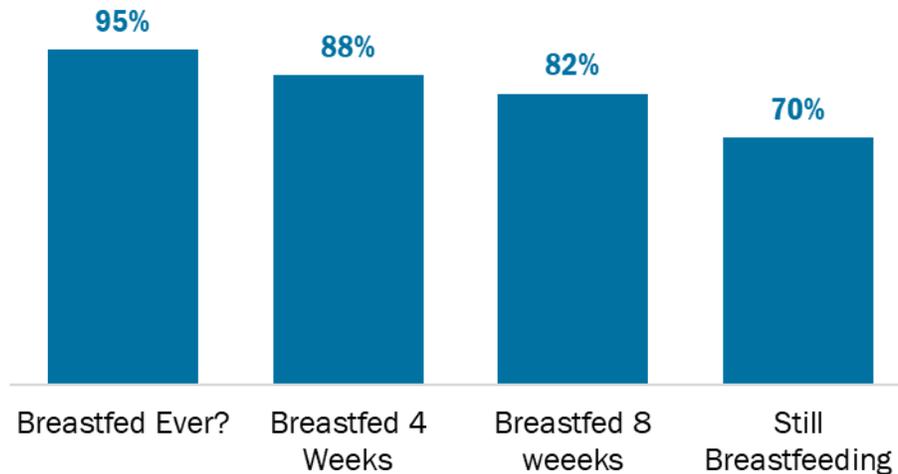
During the two weeks prior to the survey, infants were placed to sleep with the following:

- 70% in a sleep sack or wearable blanket.
- 32% in a swaddled blanket.
- 18% with a comforter, blanket, quilt or non-fitted sheets.
- 6% with soft toys, cushions or pillows.
- 5% with crib bumper pads.

## Breastfeeding

During prenatal care, 96% of mothers were asked by a health care worker if they planned to breastfeed and 95% of all mothers initiated breastfeeding. At the time they completed the survey, 70% were still breastfeeding.

### 95% of mothers breastfed their infants at least once



Twenty-six percent of women were advised by a health care worker not to breastfeed if they were using marijuana.

## Postpartum Care

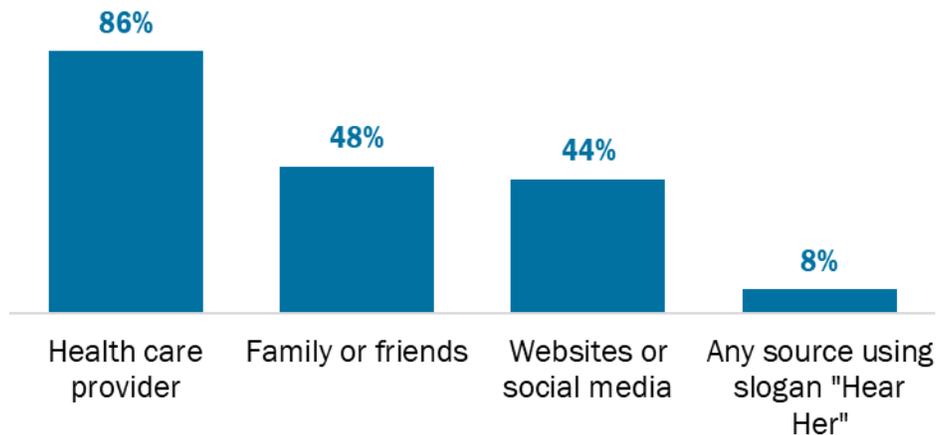
More than nine in ten (93%) women who delivered a baby had a postpartum checkup. Of these women:

- 93% talked about birth control methods with a health care worker.
- 62% talked with a health care worker about warning signs of medical conditions that they might be at risk due to their pregnancy.
- 61% talked to a health care worker about how long to wait before another pregnancy.
- 50% had a health care worker talk to them about healthy eating, exercise, and losing weight gained during pregnancy.
- 13% were tested for diabetes by a health care worker.

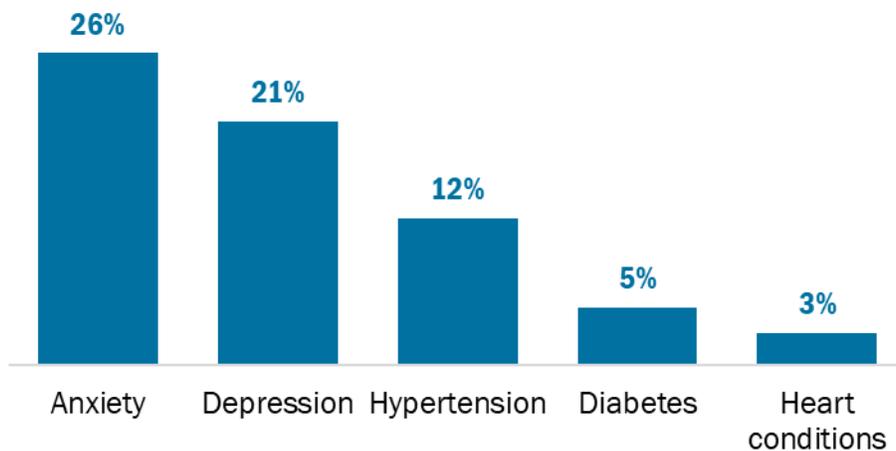
Seventy-six percent of women who smoked cigarettes before pregnancy were asked if they were smoking cigarettes or using e-cigarettes or smokeless tobacco.

Ninety percent of mothers received warning signs about postpartum complications either during or after pregnancy.

**Among women who received warning signs about postpartum complications, they reported getting information from:**



**Type of follow-up care women received during postpartum health care visit:**



Sixty-nine percent of mothers or babies reported using WIC postpartum services.

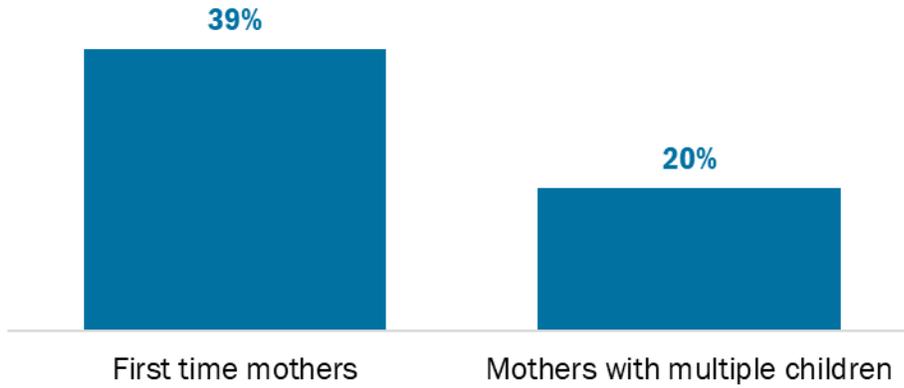
## Home Visits

Twenty-eight percent of women had a postpartum home visit from someone to help them learn to care for themselves or their new baby.

- Sixteen percent of postpartum women were visited by a nurse, nurse's aide, or midwife.

- Fifteen percent were visited by a lactation consultant.
- Seven percent were visited by a doula/childbirth educator.

### **First time mothers were more likely to have a home visit**



## Data Notes

Data in the 2023 Highlights is organized by similar topics as previous reports; however, data is pulled from [Phase 9 survey](#) which has been modified from the [Phase 8 survey](#) (2016-2022). Some topics have been dropped from the questionnaire while other have been added. Some questions within the remaining topics have been modified resulting in different responses by mothers participating in the survey.

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

### <sup>1</sup> Mental health question as written in the [Phase 9 survey](#)

**Q 62.** Which of these statements explains why you did not get the mental health services you needed?

- I couldn't afford the cost
- I couldn't get an appointment as soon as I needed
- My health insurance doesn't cover any type of mental health services
- My health insurance doesn't pay enough for mental health services
- I didn't know where to go to get services
- I was concerned that the information I shared might not be kept confidential
- I didn't want others to find out that I needed treatment
- I was concerned that I might be committed to a psychiatric hospital
- I was concerned that I might have to take medicine
- I had no transportation, treatment was too far away, or the hours were not convenient
- I didn't have time (because of a job, childcare, or other commitments)
- Other

### <sup>2</sup> Prenatal care question as written in the [Phase 9 survey](#)

**Q12.** During any of your prenatal care visits, did a health care provider do any of the following things?

Talk to me about...

- How much weight I should gain during pregnancy
- Doing tests to screen for birth defects or diseases that run in my family

- The signs and symptoms of preterm labor (labor more than 3 weeks before the baby is due)
- What to do if I feel depressed or anxious during my pregnancy or after my baby is born

Ask me...

- If I planned to breastfeed my new baby
- If I planned to use birth control after my baby was born
- If I was taking any prescription medication
- If I smoked cigarettes or used e-cigarettes (“vapes”) or other smokeless tobacco
- If I was drinking alcohol
- If someone was hurting me emotionally or physically
- If I was using illegal drugs
- If I was using marijuana
- If I wanted to be tested for HIV

<sup>3</sup> **Data source:** Vital Statistics Data System; Birth Certificate

## Acknowledgement

Vermont PRAMS thanks the participants who shared their preconception, pregnancy, and postpartum experiences.

We thank the PRAMS Working Group, which includes the PRAMS Team, Division of Reproductive Health, CDC and the Vermont PRAMS for their role in conducting PRAMS surveillance.