

The Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS) is a survey of women who recently gave birth that asks about their experiences and behaviors 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 2018 Vermont births, organized by topic area. Further information is available upon request.

Tobacco Use, E-Cigarettes and Smoking Cessation

- 24% of women smoked cigarettes in the three months prior to pregnancy.
 - 85% of women who had a health care visit in the 12 months before pregnancy were asked if they smoke cigarettes.
- 15% smoked cigarettes during the last trimester, meaning that 40% of those who were smoking before pregnancy quit before the last three months.
- 17% smoked cigarettes at the time of the survey.
- 8% of women reported using e-cigarettes at any time in the previous two years.
 - 4% of all women used e-cigarettes in the three months before pregnancy.
 - 2% of all women used e-cigarettes in the last three months of pregnancy.
- 75% of all smokers reported using 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): 69%
 - Set a specific date to quit smoking: 31%
 - Used a nicotine patch, gum, lozenge, spray or inhaler: 20%
 - About 10% to 15% used each of the following in an attempt to quit: switched to e-cigarettes; used booklets or videos; used the internet (7%); called a quit line like 802Quits or visited a national or state website.
 - About 5% went to counseling.
 - Some smokers (too few to provide an estimate) reported that they: attended a class or program; used a pill like Zyban® or Chantix®; used a texting program; used a cessation application (“app”).
 - Other approaches not listed were reported by 7% of smokers.
- 85% of smokers had a doctor, nurse, or other health care worker advise them during a prenatal visit to quit smoking. Actions and recommendations on the part of health care workers included:
 - 56% of smokers discussed with a health care worker how to quit smoking.
 - At a prenatal visit, about one-third to one-half of all smokers had a health care worker: refer them to a quit line such as 802Quits; provide them with booklets, videos or other materials to help them quit smoking on their own; suggest that they attend a class or program to stop smoking; ask if a family member or friend would support their decision to quit; suggest that they set a specific date by which to stop smoking; recommend a nicotine patch or nicotine gum.
 - 17% of smokers were referred to counseling to help with quitting, and 6% were prescribed a nicotine spray or inhaler.

Alcohol Use

- 68% of women drank alcohol during the three months before pregnancy.
 - 3% drank more than one drink per day before pregnancy.
- 18% had at least one drinking binge (four or more drinks during a two-hour span) during the three months before pregnancy.
- 11% drank alcohol during pregnancy.
 - 97% of women with a prenatal care visit were asked about their alcohol use.
 - 86% of women who drank during the three months before pregnancy were advised not to drink during pregnancy.

Other Substance Use

- 20% of women used a substance other than tobacco or alcohol during the month before pregnancy¹.
 - The most commonly used substance was marijuana (17% of women).
 - 3% used Adderall®, Ritalin® or similar stimulants.
 - 2% used prescription pain relievers.
 - 1% used cocaine.
 - Heroin use, synthetic marijuana use and amphetamine use were also reported, but there were too few respondents to each to provide an estimate.
- 13% used a substance other than alcohol or tobacco during pregnancy.
 - Marijuana was the most commonly used substance during pregnancy (10%) followed by prescription pain relievers (3%).
 - 1% used Adderall®, Ritalin® or similar stimulants.
 - 86% of all women with a prenatal care visit were asked about their use of drugs such as marijuana, cocaine, crack, or meth.

Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT)

- 4% of women used methadone, Suboxone®, or another maintenance treatment drug during the 12 months before pregnancy.
- 4% received MAT during pregnancy.
- 4% used MAT after their new baby was born.

Mental Health

- 24% of women had depression at some point during the three months before pregnancy.
 - 20% of women had a health care visit for depression or anxiety in the year before pregnancy.
- 20% reported having depression at some point during pregnancy.
 - 90% of women with a prenatal care visit were asked if they were feeling down or depressed.
- 11% had symptoms indicating a risk for depression in the postpartum period.
 - 96% of women with a postpartum checkup were asked if they were feeling down or depressed.

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

Oral Health

- 63% of women had a teeth cleaning during pregnancy.
 - Women whose deliveries were covered by Medicaid were less likely to have a teeth cleaning than those with deliveries covered by private insurance (52% to 73%).
 - Women who had a discussion with a prenatal health care provider about the health of their teeth and gums were significantly more likely to have a teeth cleaning during pregnancy than those who hadn't (67% versus 59%).
- 92% knew it was important to care for their teeth and gums during pregnancy.
- About half of women (54%) 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.
- 38% of women who received prenatal care had a doctor, nurse, or other health care worker suggest that they go see a dentist.
- 24% needed to see a dentist for a problem during their pregnancy; of these, 25% did not see a dentist or a dental clinic about a problem.

“I had a hard time getting to the dentist because of transportation.”

Immunization

- 80% of women got a Tdap vaccination during pregnancy.
- 68% got a flu shot in the 12 months before giving birth.
 - 55% of those younger than 25 got a flu shot during that time, a significantly lower percentage than those 25 or older (70%).
- Women enrolled in Medicaid during their pregnancies were less likely to get immunized:
 - 58% of those whose deliveries were insured by Medicaid got a flu shot, compared to 77% of those with private insurance.
 - 75% of those whose deliveries were insured by Medicaid got a Tdap vaccination during pregnancy, compared to 86% of those privately insured.

Vehicle Safety

- When riding in a car, truck or van, 99% of infants always rode in an infant car seat. One 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.
- 98% knew that car seats should not be placed in front of an air bag.
- Ways that women got their new baby's car seats included:
 - 47% bought a seat new;
 - 31% received it new as a gift;
 - 21% already had a seat for another baby.
 - Borrowed a car seat from a friend/family; bought a used seat; given a seat by the hospital or by a community program, and other write-in responses were all chosen by less than 10%

Work and Workplace Leave

- 81% of women worked during their pregnancies.
 - 81% of women who worked during pregnancy were returning to work (i.e. had returned or planned to return to their jobs).
- 42% of women returning to work did not have paid leave.
 - Among women returning to work, 62% of Medicaid-insured women did not have paid leave at their jobs, compared to 35% of those privately insured.
 - About two-thirds (68%) of women returning to work felt they had too little time off available to them after delivery.
- The most common factors affecting leave time decisions were: couldn't afford to take any further leave (43%); the job didn't offer paid leave (42%); did not have enough leave time to take any or more time off (33%).

“I am using all my sick time and all my vacation. When I go back to work, I will not have any time off so I hope my child will not be sick.”

Preconception Health & Family Planning

- 79% of women had a visit to a health care provider during the 12 months before pregnancy. Of these:
 - 78% were asked about what kind of work they did;
 - 70% were asked if someone was hurting them emotionally or physically;
 - 67% were asked if they were feeling down or depressed;
 - 56% were asked whether they wanted to have or not have children;
 - 44% had a talk about using birth control;
 - 39% were told to take a vitamin with folic acid;
 - 39% discussed maintaining a healthy weight;
 - 32% had a talk about improving health before a pregnancy;
 - 27% had a talk about STIs;
 - 25% were tested for HIV.
- 33% of women talked to a doctor, nurse or other health care workers about preparing for a pregnancy. Topics included:
 - 54% - getting their vaccines updated before pregnancy;
 - 50% - how drinking during pregnancy can affect a baby;
 - 48% - the safety of medicines during pregnancy;
 - 47% - how smoking during pregnancy can affect a baby;
 - 43% - how illegal drugs during pregnancy can affect a baby;
 - 42% - visiting a dentist/dental hygienist before pregnancy;
 - 30% - counseling for genetic diseases.
 - 23% - counseling or treatment for depression or anxiety.
- 34% of births resulted from unintended pregnancies.

Prenatal & Postpartum Care Visits

- Nearly all women had at least one prenatal care visit. Among these women:
 - 98% were asked if they were smoking cigarettes.
 - 92% of women with a prenatal care visit were asked if they planned to use birth control after their babies were born.
 - 83% had a discussion with a health care worker about 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.
 - 66% were asked if they knew how much weight they should gain during pregnancy.
 - 57% of women were asked if they wanted to be tested for HIV.
 - 50% discussed seatbelt use during pregnancy with their provider.
- 92% had a postpartum checkup. Of these women:
 - 91% talked about birth control methods with a health care worker.
 - 52% talked to a health care worker about how long to wait before another pregnancy.
 - 39% were given or prescribed a contraceptive method such as the pill, patch, shot or condoms.
 - 30% had a health care worker insert an IUD or contraceptive implant.
 - 63% had a health care worker talk to them about healthy eating, exercise, and losing weight gained during pregnancy.
 - 67% were asked if they smoke cigarettes.
- 82% of women were trying to prevent another pregnancy.

Breastfeeding

- 97% of women with a prenatal care visit were asked if they planned to breastfeed.
- 93% of mothers initiated breastfeeding.
 - 85% breastfed at least 4 weeks and 78% 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; the hospital provided a phone number for breastfeeding support; mother was not provided a gift pack with formula.
- 59% of babies who were breastfed at least once were not given a pacifier by hospital staff.
- 85% of women who delivered low birthweight babies were provided with a breast pump by the hospital.
- 69% of all mothers were offered a class on breastfeeding.
 - 33% of first-time mothers attended a breastfeeding class.

“I know there is a ton of support and information surrounding breastfeeding that is available here, but when you've just given birth it all felt confusing and difficult to access.”

Sleep Environment

- 89% of mothers exclusively placed their infant to sleep on his or her back.
- 78% of infants always or often slept alone in their own cribs or beds.
 - 10% of infants sometimes slept alone, and 13% rarely or never slept alone.
- 41% of infants usually slept with a blanket, 11% usually slept with crib bumper pads, 7% usually slept on a couch, sofa or armchair, and 6% usually slept with toys, cushions or pillows.
- 97% of women had a doctor, nurse or other health care worker tell them to place their baby on her/his back to sleep.
 - 93% 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.
 - 69% were told to place their baby's crib or bed in their room.

Social Support

- The following types of social support were each identified as available during pregnancy by around 85% to 90% of women: someone to loan her \$50; someone to help her if she were sick and needed to be in bed; someone to take her to the clinic or doctor's office if she needed a ride; someone to talk with about her problems.
 - 80% of women reported that they had all four types of support, while 7% reported having none of these sources of support.
- The following types of social support were identified as available since giving birth by around 90% 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 4% reported having none of them.

“I have a supportive extended family. We have had to borrow money for childcare. I have problems with depression but cannot afford care for myself. Fortunately, I have a very supportive husband and mom. Without them, our health would suffer dramatically.”

Data notes: If a given question response received fewer than ten answers, or fewer than 30 respondents answered a question, the question is not used to provide an estimate. 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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