

The Importance of Prenatal Care

Promoting Health for Parents and Children

Access to prenatal care is crucial for the well-being of parents and children before and after pregnancy. However, many individuals face challenges in accessing such care. Learn about the importance of prenatal care, the obstacles families encounter, and how NCHS can help.

The Importance of Accessing Prenatal Care

Ensuring regular prenatal care not only promotes the well-being of both mother and baby but also ensures a safer and healthier pregnancy journey.

13-14 prenatal visits

In the United States, experts recommend **13 to 14 prenatal visits** with an obstetrician or a midwife, starting between weeks eight and 10 of pregnancy.

3x more likely to have low birth weight

Infants whose mothers don't receive prenatal care are **3 times more likely to have a low birth weight**, defined by the World Health Organization as less than 5.5 lbs, and are 5 times more likely to die in infancy.



What is a Maternity Care Desert?

Maternal care deserts are geographic areas where pregnant individuals struggle to access necessary prenatal care from obstetricians or midwives.



36% of All U.S. Counties

About **36% of all US counties** are "maternity care deserts."

2.2 million US women

More than **2.2 million US women** of childbearing age – 15 to 44 – live in maternity care deserts

NE, ND, SD, AK, & OK

States with the highest rates of maternity care deserts include **Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Alaska, and Oklahoma.**

Maternity Care Deserts in Nebraska

Over 1/3 of the states population

Ongoing closures of rural health services hinder hospitals' ability to enhance maternal and infant outcomes in Nebraska. **With 50 rural counties out of the total 93** over a third of the state's population resides in these areas.

80,000 women

Approximately **15% to 20% of women** of childbearing age in Nebraska reside in a county lacking proper maternal care, which equates to roughly 80,000 women.

51.6% of Counties are Maternity Deserts

51.6% of counties in Nebraska are defined as maternity care deserts compared to **36% in the U.S**

No birthing hospital within 30 minutes

15.9% of women in Nebraska had no birthing hospital within 30 minutes compared to 9.7% in the U.S.



How NCHS Services Support Pregnant Women in Nebraska



NCHS provides high-quality pregnancy services for women in Nebraska. Expectant mothers can benefit from the guidance and support of our trained professionals.



NCHS can help new and expecting mothers access prenatal care and other community resources, ensuring comprehensive support for maternal health and wellness.



Additionally, NCHS provides prenatal and postpartum mental health referrals for women who may be experiencing anxiety, depression, or other mental health concerns during and after pregnancy.



NCHS also connects pregnant women with community resources such as housing assistance, food support, and healthcare access.

If you or someone you know is pregnant in Nebraska and needs access to reliable, high-quality maternity care services, NCHS can assist them in accessing the prenatal care they need.

Reach out today to learn more about the services we offer and how we can support you through this important journey.

<https://nchs.org/pregnancy-services/>

Sources:

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