U.S. Preterm Birth Statistics

An Average Week in the United States

- 8,768 babies are born preterm (less than 37 weeks)
- 1,462 babies are born very preterm (less than 32 weeks)
- 6,071 babies are born low birthweight (less than 2500 grams or 5 1/2 pounds).
- 1,082 babies are born very low birthweight (less than 1500 grams or 3 1/3 pounds).
- In 2012, there were 455,918 preterm births in the United States, representing 11.5% of live births.
- Between 2002 and 2012, the rate of infants born preterm in the United States declined 5%.
- During 2010-2012 (average) in the United States, preterm birth rates were highest for women ages 40 and older (16.6%), followed by women under age 20 (13.5%), ages 30-39 (11.8%) and ages 20-29 (11.2%).
- During 2010-2012 (average) in the United States, preterm birth rates were highest for black infants (16.8%), followed by Native Americans (13.6%), Hispanics (11.7%), whites (10.5%) and Asians (10.3%).
- In 2005, the annual societal economic cost (medical, educational, and lost productivity) associated with preterm birth in the United States was at least $26.2 billion.

Data courtesy of National Center for Health Statistics, final natality data, and March of Dimes Peristats.