

Births to Teens

Hispanic and African American women 15–19 years old were more likely to give birth compared to county teens as a whole.

- Contra Costa's teen birth rate was lower than the California rate.
- More than half of all teen births were to Hispanic teens.



Editor's note: This section presents data for births to women ages 15–19 in Contra Costa. All rates presented are age-specific birth rates per 1,000 women ages 15–19 for the particular group, city or county.

Between 2005 and 2007, there were 2,657 births to women age 15–19 years residing in Contra Costa County. This means that there were on average 886 births to women per year in the county. Contra Costa's teen birth rate (23.5 per 1,000) was lower than that of California (37.4 per 1,000).¹

Table 1 ■ Teen births by race/ethnicity

Contra Costa County 2005–2007

	Births	Percent	Rate
Hispanic	1,544	58.1%	53.4*
African American	528	19.9%	42.5*
White	390	14.0%	7.2**
Asian/Pacific Islander	89	3.3%	6.6**
Total	2,657	100.0%	23.5

These are age-specific rates per 1,000 women ages 15–19.

Total includes some racial/ethnic groups not shown.

* Significantly higher rate compared to county.

** Significantly lower rate compared to county.

Hispanic women had the highest percentage (58.1%) and highest rate of teen births (53.4 per 1,000)—higher than county teens overall (23.5 per 1,000) and teens of any other race/ethnic group listed. African American teen births represented almost one-fifth (19.9%) of the county's teen births and the African American teen birth rate (42.5 per 1,000) was higher than the rate of county teens overall. Whites and Asians/Pacific Islanders had lower teen birth rates than county teens overall.

Table 2 ■ Teen births by selected communities

Contra Costa County 2005–2007

	Cases	Percent	Rate
Richmond	554	20.9%	54.0*
Antioch	463	17.4%	39.0*
Concord	341	12.8%	28.8
Pittsburg	340	12.8%	47.2*
San Pablo	237	8.9%	67.4*
Bay Point	151	5.7%	60.2*
Brentwood	135	5.1%	24.9
Oakley	108	4.1%	29.2
Martinez	48	1.8%	14.0**
Hercules	39	1.5%	14.2**
Pinole	33	1.2%	16.8**
Walnut Creek	28	1.1%	6.3**
El Cerrito	21	0.8%	15.2**
Pleasant Hill	15	0.6%	NA

These are age-specific rates per 1,000 women ages 15–19.

Not all Contra Costa cities shown.

*Significantly higher rate compared to county.

** Significantly lower rate compared to county.

Four communities had more than 300 births to teens between 2005 and 2007. These were Richmond (554), Antioch (463), Concord (341) and Pittsburg (340).

Five communities had significantly higher teen birth rates than county teens overall: San Pablo (67.4 per 1,000), Bay Point (60.2 per 1,000), Richmond (54.0 per 1,000), Pittsburg (47.2 per 1,000) and Antioch (39.0 per 1,000).

Walnut Creek (6.3 per 1,000), Martinez (14.0 per 1,000), Hercules (14.2 per 1,000), El Cerrito (15.2 per 1,000) and Pinole (16.8 per 1,000) had rates of teen births that were lower than the county rate overall.

What is it?

Teen birth is typically defined as births that occur to teenagers 15 to 19 years old, although sometimes younger ages are included. The measure for teen births presented in this report is the teen birth rate, which is the number of births to teens 15 to 19 years old per 1,000 female teens 15 to 19 years old.

Why is it important?

Most teen pregnancies are unintended,² and teen childbearing can have negative consequences for the mother, father and child. When teenagers become parents, they are less likely than teens without children to achieve educational goals, find sustainable and productive work, and become self sufficient.^{3,4} Infants born to teens are more likely to be born low birth weight and suffer from related health problems.^{5,6} In addition, compared to children of older mothers, children of teen mothers are more likely to do poorly in or drop out of school and to become teen parents themselves.⁷ It is important to note that some teen parents successfully face these challenges and meet their educational and career goals and raise healthy children.

Who does it impact the most?

Teen births have been associated with a variety of factors including low income, low maternal education, lack of effective family planning practices, lack of education or counseling regarding family planning, previous teen pregnancy and initiation of sexual activity at a young age.³

In the United States, teen birth rates differ by race/ethnicity. In 2007, Hispanic teens had the highest teen birth rate, and Hispanics, non-Hispanic blacks and American Indians all had teen birth rates higher than the United States overall.⁸

What can we do about it?

Teen pregnancy is a complex issue. Preventing teen pregnancy requires a coordinated approach by community programs and broad efforts to influence values and popular culture and engage parents and schools.⁹ There are different types of programs that can reduce sexual risk-taking behaviors and/or teen pregnancy, such as comprehensive sexuality education, youth development programs, and early childhood programs.^{9,10,11}

At a minimum, it is essential that youths have access to age-appropriate and medically accurate information about abstinence and contraception as well as confidential, affordable and accessible reproductive health services that include contraception. Interventions that affect nonsexual risk and protective factors (e.g., school performance; positive plans for the future; connections to family, school and faith community) that may reduce sexual risk-taking behaviors or pregnancy should also be considered when addressing this pressing issue.

Data Sources: Births to Teens

TABLES

Tables 1, 2: Birth data from the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), Birth Statistical Master Files, 2005-2007. Any analyses or interpretations of the data were reached by the Community Health Assessment, Planning and Evaluation (CHAPE) Unit of Contra Costa Health Services and not the CDPH. Data presented for Hispanics include Hispanic residents of any race. Data presented for whites, Asians/Pacific Islanders and African Americans include non-Hispanic residents. Not all race/ethnicities shown but all are included in totals for the county and for each city. Rates were not calculated for any group with fewer than 20 cases due to unstable estimates. These tables include births to women ages 15-19 who are residents of Contra Costa and average crude teen birth rates for 2005 through 2007.

Teen birth rate is the number of infants born to teen girls 15–19 years old divided by the total population of teen girls 15–19 years for the particular group, city or county multiplied by 1,000.

Table 1: Population estimates for Contra Costa and its subpopulations (by age, gender and race/ethnicity) for 2005–2007 from State of California, Department of Finance, *Race/Ethnic Population with Age and Sex Detail, 2000–2050*. Sacramento, CA, July 2007.

Table 2: Population estimates for Contra Costa and its subpopulations (by age, gender and city/census place) for 2005–2007 were provided by the Urban Strategies Council, Oakland, CA. January, 2010.

TEXT

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