

2. Prenatal Care

What It Is

Prenatal care is measured by the number of pregnant women who receive prenatal care during their first trimester.

Why It Is Important

Early prenatal care can encourage healthy habits during pregnancy, help to identify potential medical problems, and facilitate involvement with parenting support, nutrition, and other educational resources. The benefits are greatest for women at risk for poor birth outcomes, including teenagers and women with low incomes. Inadequate prenatal care often reflects a lack of access to health care resources and can contribute to nutritional deficiencies in mothers and infants, lower birth weights, and infant mortality.

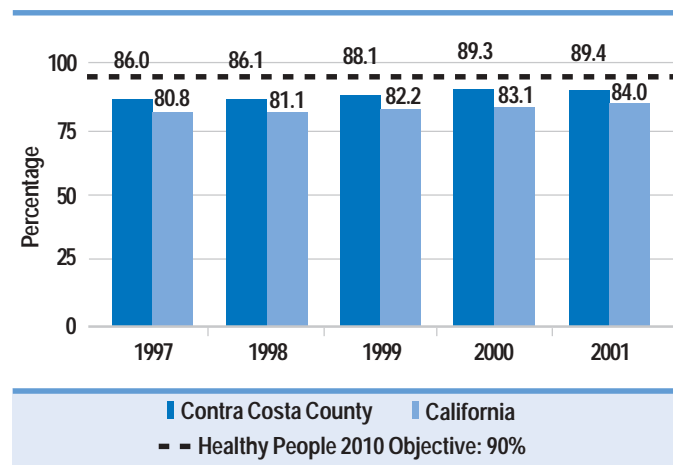
How We Are Doing

The percentage of Contra Costa County women receiving prenatal care in the first trimester increased from 86% in 1997 to 89% in 2001, and neared the Healthy People 2010 Objective of 90%.³ Initiating prenatal care in the first trimester varies by ethnicity: 94% of Caucasians and 91% of Asian/Pacific Islanders received timely prenatal care, as compared to 85% of African Americans and 83% of Latinas. The earlier prenatal care is received, the more effective that care is likely to be. In 2001, women who received no care until the third trimester included 129 Latinas, 36 African Americans, 28 Asian/Pacific Islanders and 56 Caucasians.

Data Development

Because drug exposure in utero frequently causes developmental delays in infancy and early childhood, it is important to identify a process with which to measure the number of drug-exposed newborns, and provide for the equitable administration of drug screening prior to and at birth. Please refer to the Data Development Agenda section of this report for more information.

Figure 2.1 — Percentage of Women Receiving First Trimester Prenatal Care



Source: State of California, Department of Health Services, Center for Health Statistics, Birth Records, 2002.

Note: The Healthy People 2010 Objective is 90% of women receiving prenatal care in the first trimester.

Table 2.1 — Contra Costa County Percentage of Women Receiving First Trimester Care by Ethnicity, 2001

Ethnicity	Total Number of Births	Percentage of Births with First Trimester Care
Caucasian / Other / Unknown	6,244	94.1%
Asian / Pacific Islander	1,775	91.1%
African American	1,268	84.7%
Latina	3,839	82.8%
Total Births	13,126	89.4%

Source: State of California, Department of Health Services, Center for Health Statistics, Birth Records, 2002.

Note: Percentage is based on the number of women receiving first trimester prenatal care in each ethnicity divided by the total number of births for each ethnicity.

³ In the "California Maternal and Child Health Data Book, May 2002," Contra Costa County was found to have the highest level of early entry into prenatal care in California, surpassing the Healthy People 2010 objective, at 90.1%; varying slightly from data currently reported by State Vital Statistics. This report was produced by the Family Health Outcomes Project of the University of California, San Francisco.