



Unintended Pregnancy Prevention: Home

Unintended Pregnancy

An unintended pregnancy is a pregnancy that is either mistimed or unwanted at the time of conception. It is a core concept in understanding the fertility of populations and the unmet need for contraception. Unintended pregnancy is associated with an increased risk of morbidity for women, and with health behaviors during pregnancy that are associated with adverse effects. For example, women with an unintended pregnancy may delay prenatal care, which may affect the health of the infant. Women of all ages may have unintended pregnancies, but some groups, such as teens, are at a higher risk.



In 2001, approximately one-half of pregnancies in the United States were unintended (Finer 2006, Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health), and the United States has set a national goal of decreasing unintended pregnancies to 30% by 2010.

Efforts to decrease unintended pregnancy include finding better forms of contraception, and increasing contraceptive use and adherence. Research has also focused on better understanding pregnancy intention and how it is measured. As one study suggests, "A better understanding of the multiple dimensions of unintended pregnancy also may lead to a better understanding of the consequences of these pregnancies" (Santelli 2003, [The Measurement and Meaning of Unintended Pregnancy*](#)).

Selected Resources

[Adolescent Reproductive Health](#)

When teens give birth, their future prospects decline. Teen mothers are less likely to complete high school and more likely to live in poverty than other teens [...more](#)

[Division of Reproductive Health's Unintended Pregnancy, STD, HIV, Intervention Research \(USHIR\)](#)

Our mission is to conduct integrative research into the prevention of HIV, sexually transmitted diseases, and unintended pregnancy and the promotion of health among women of reproductive age, their partners, and their children [...more](#)

[PRAMS and Unintended Pregnancy](#)

According to the 1995 National Survey of Family Growth, 49% of all pregnancies in the United States and 31% of pregnancies resulting in a live birth are unintended. Recent data from PRAMS show that these rates may not be declining in all states.

[Interactive Atlas of Reproductive Health](#)

A web-based interactive geographic information system (GIS) dedicated to reproductive health issues such as infant mortality, fertility, and low birth weight.

Related Resources

[Disparities in Rates of Unintended Pregnancy in the United States, 1994 and 2001*](#) Finer LB, Henshaw SK, *Perspectives on Sexual Reproductive Health*, 2006;38:90-96. PDF 3.27MB

[The Measurement and Meaning of Unintended Pregnancy*](#) (Alan Guttmacher Institute)
Unintended pregnancy is an important concept for understanding the fertility of populations and the need for contraception, but more research is needed to elucidate the role of intentions in contraceptive use and fertility. Clarifying issues of meaning and measurement is fundamental to developing a more complete understanding of pregnancy intentions, which would help improve public health and clinical prevention programs aimed at preventing unintended pregnancy.

[Insurance Coverage of Unintended Pregnancies Resulting in Live-Born Infants](#)

In the United States during 1994, approximately 49% of all pregnancies, excluding miscarriages, were unintended. Unintended pregnancy can result in adverse health outcomes that affect the mother, infant, and family. Little is known about the distribution of unintended pregnancy with respect to the payment source for health care. Source: *MMWR* 1999;48(No.5).

[Use of Contraception and Use of Family Planning Services in the United States: 1982-](#)

[2002](#); NCHS Fact Sheet for *Advance Data* No. 350 PDF 1.5 MB

[Search PubMed for articles on Unintended Pregnancy](#)

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