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Maternal Deaths

Pregnancy-related death rates rose in the U.S. during the past several decades, from 7.2 deaths per 100,000 live births in 1987 to 17.8 deaths per 100,000 births in 2011. Although the reason for the overall increase is unclear, research shows an increasing number of pregnant women have conditions such as high blood pressure, diabetes and chronic heart disease, putting them at higher risk for complications.

Maternal deaths per 100,000 live births

1987 – 7.2 deaths

1988 – 9.4 deaths

1989 – 9.8 deaths

1990 – 10 deaths

1991 – 10.3 deaths

1992 – 10.8 deaths

1993 – 11.1 deaths

1994 – 12.9 deaths

1995 – 11.3 deaths

1996 – 11.3 deaths

1997 – 12.9 deaths

1998 – 12 deaths

1999 – 13.2 deaths

2000 – 14.5 deaths

2001 – 14.7 deaths

2002 – 14.1 deaths

2003 – 16.8 deaths

2004 – 15.2 deaths

2005 – 15.4 deaths

2006 – 15.7 deaths

2007 – 14.5 deaths

2008 – 15.5 deaths

2009 – 17.8 deaths

2010 – 16.7 deaths

2011 – 17.8 deaths

In 2011, cardiovascular disease accounted for the highest percentage of pregnancy-related deaths.

Cardiovascular disease – 15.1%

Non-cardiovascular disease – 14.1%

Infection/sepsis – 14%

Hemorrhage – 11.3%

Cardiomyopathy – 10.1%

Thrombotic pulmonary embolism – 9.8%

Hypertensive disorder of pregnancy – 8.4%

Amniotic fluid embolism – 5.6%

Cerebrovascular accident – 5.4%

Anesthesia complications – 0.3%

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention