

# Reproductive Health



# Fertility

The fertility rate of a population is expressed by the number of births that occur over a given time period per thousand women of childbearing age (15 - 44 years). Fertility is declining in the United States and in Alaska. Despite a rapid decline in fertility since 1980, Alaska still has one of the highest fertility rates in the country.

- ◆ In 1980, Alaska's fertility rate was 31% higher than the national rate. Between 1980 and 2000, fertility in Alaska declined by 20%. While still significantly higher than the national rate, Alaska's fertility rate differed from the national average by just 4.5% in 2000.
- ◆ Alaska women are most likely to have a baby when they are in their twenties. The fertility rate for 15 - 19 year olds (usually referred to as the teen birth rate) is low in comparison – one-third the rate of 25 - 29 year olds and about one-half that of 30 - 34 year olds.
- ◆ Alaska Natives have higher fertility rates for every age group than Alaskan women of other races. Alaska Native teenagers, especially older teens (ages 18 - 19), have very high fertility rates compared to other teenagers – almost twice the total fertility rate for 18 - 19 year olds.

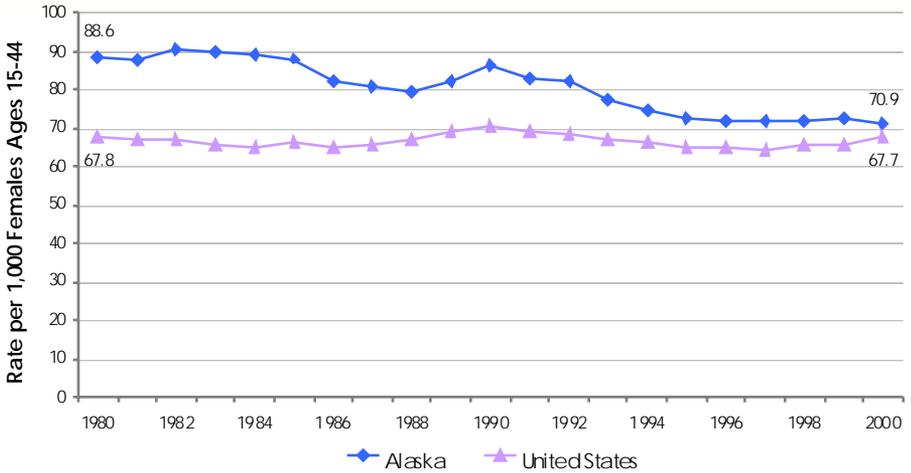
According to the Alaska Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System,

- ◆ Alaskan women who delivered a live-born infant in 2000 started menstruating at an average age of twelve and got pregnant with their first baby at age 20.
- ◆ The period of time between menarche and first pregnancy is, on average, one-third shorter for Alaska Native women (6 years) than for other races.

Data Sources: Alaska Bureau of Vital Statistics; National Center for Health Statistics; Alaska Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System.

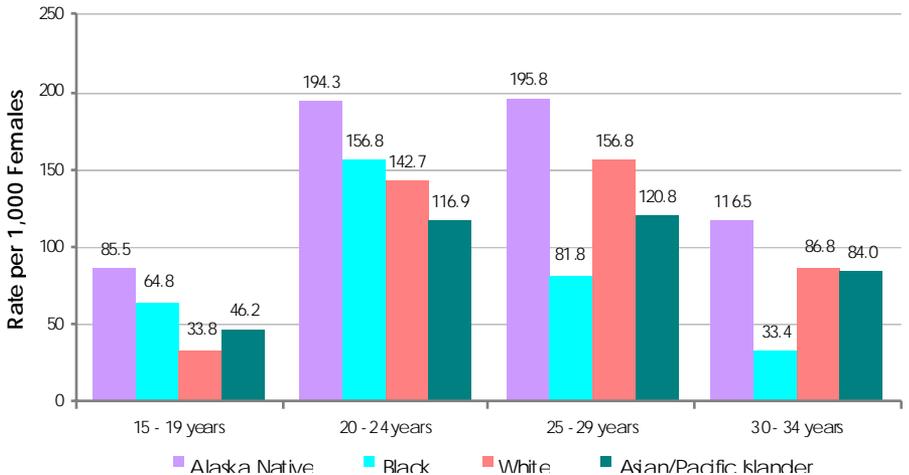
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## Fertility Rates by Year Alaska and United States, 1980-2000



Data Sources: Alaska Bureau of Vital Statistics; National Center for Health Statistics. Prepared by MCH Epidemiology Unit

## Fertility Rate by Race and Age Alaska, 1999



Data Source: Alaska Bureau of Vital Statistics. Prepared by MCH Epidemiology Unit.

# Contraception

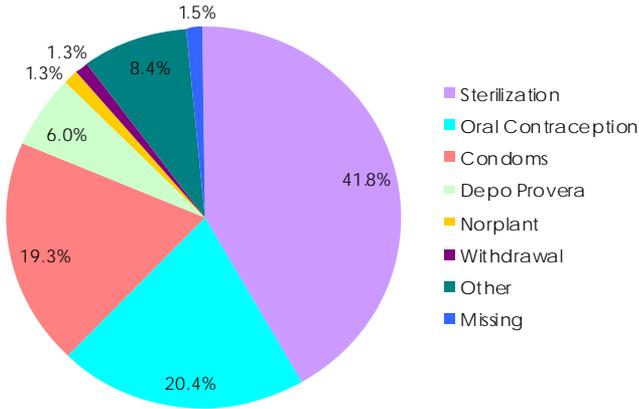
Seventy percent of Alaskan women ages 18 and over report that they use some type of birth control method. Among these women, the most frequently used method is sterilization (43%). Other commonly used methods are oral contraceptive pills (20%) and condoms (19%).

- ◆ Almost one-fourth of Alaskan women ages 18 and over report that they are not using birth control. Among these women, 18% want to be pregnant, while 53% of them cite reasons for not practicing birth control that put them at risk of having an unintended pregnancy.
- ◆ Twenty-three percent of Alaskan women who delivered a live-born infant in 2000 reported they became pregnant despite the use of a contraceptive method.
- ◆ Eighty-one percent of Alaskan women report that they were currently using a method of birth control when surveyed at about three months postpartum.

Data Sources: Alaska Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System; Alaska Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System.

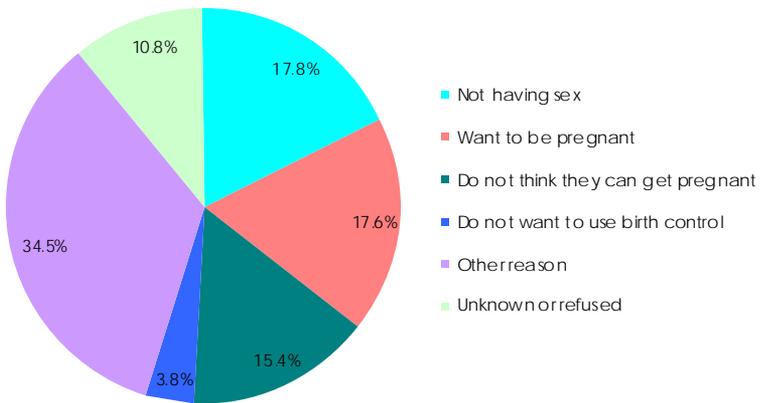
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## Birth Control Methods Among Women Who Practice Contraception, Ages 18 and Over, Alaska, 1998



Data Source: Alaska Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System. Prepared by MCH Epidemiology Unit.

## Reasons for Not Using Birth Control, Women Ages 18 and Over, Alaska, 1998



Data Source: Alaska Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System. Prepared by MCH Epidemiology Unit.

# Family Planning

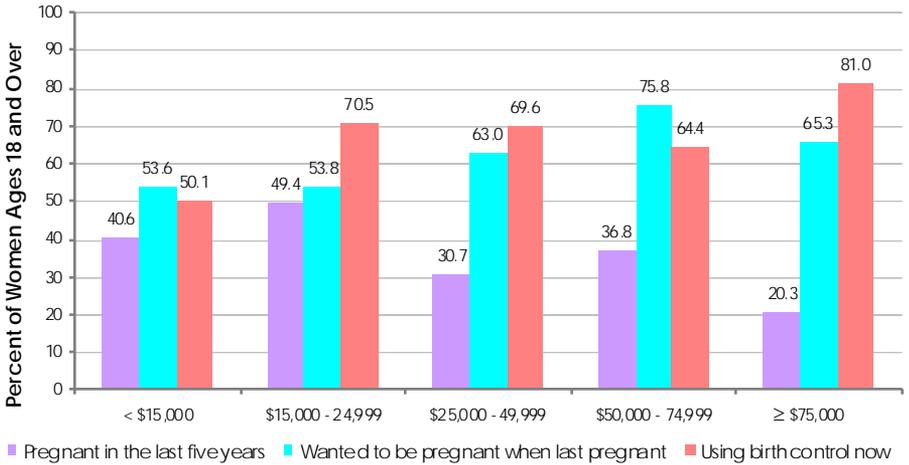
Income and race are associated with fertility and contraceptive behavior. As income decreases, women are more likely to have been pregnant in the last five years, less likely to have wanted to be pregnant, and less likely to be using birth control.

- ◆ Choice of health care provider is related to income level, with women in the lower income categories more frequently using public providers as their usual source of care. Almost one-fourth of Alaskan women ages 18 and over go to public health care providers as their usual source of services for female health concerns, while 62% report going to private physicians.
- ◆ Black women who delivered a live-born infant in 2000 had the highest percentage of self-reported postpartum birth control use (90%), followed by whites (83%), Alaska Natives (77%) and Asian/Pacific Islanders (70%).
- ◆ Black women who delivered a live birth in 2000 had the highest percentage of having had a live-born infant despite the use of birth control (36%), followed by whites (24%), Alaska Natives (22%) and Asian/Pacific Islanders (20%).

Data Sources: Alaska Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System; Alaska Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System.

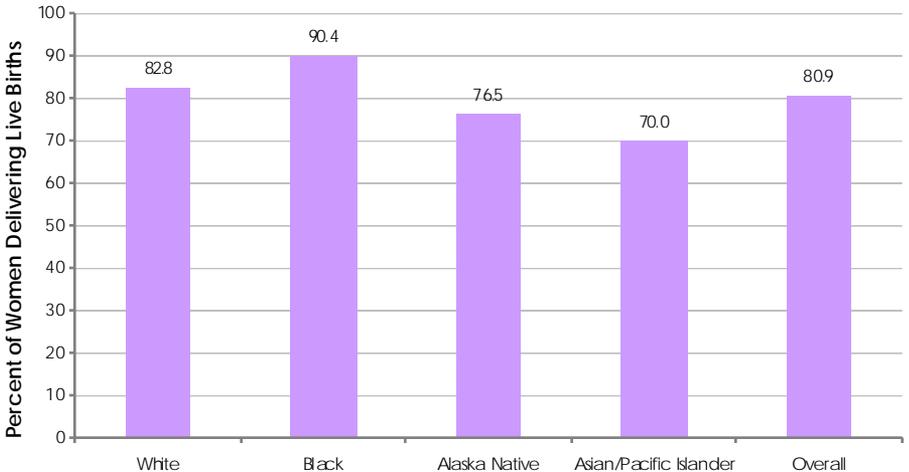
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## Reproductive Health Characteristics by Annual Income Level, Women Ages 18 and Over, Alaska, 1998



Data Source: Alaska Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System. Prepared by MCH Epidemiology Unit.

## Postpartum Birth Control Use by Race Alaska, 2000



Data Source: Alaska Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System, MCH Epidemiology Unit.

# Unintended Pregnancies

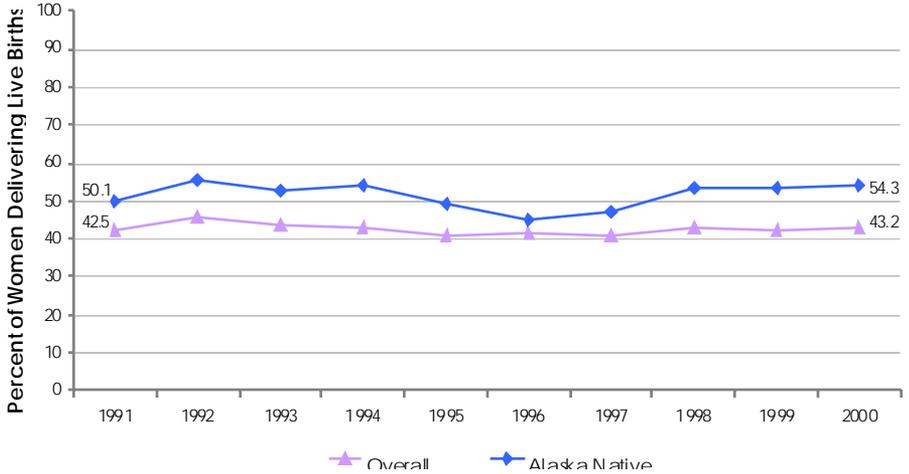
Unintended pregnancies result in considerable emotional and financial costs to individuals and society. Pregnancy is considered to be unintended when the woman did not want to be pregnant at the time or desired a later pregnancy. For the information presented here, unintended pregnancies are limited to those that result in a live-born infant.

- ◆ In Alaska, the overall prevalence of unintended pregnancies resulting in live births (42.6%) has not changed significantly over the past decade.
- ◆ The prevalence of unintended pregnancy among women who deliver a live birth is consistently higher among Alaska Native women compared to white women.
- ◆ Alaskan teenagers who deliver a live-born infant are more likely than women of other ages to have an unintended pregnancy. The prevalence of unintended pregnancies among teenagers less than 18 years old and 18 -19 years old was 91% and 61%, respectively, in 2000.
- ◆ Women who were in their thirties when they had their most recent baby had the lowest prevalence of unintended pregnancy (30.4%).

Data Source: Alaska Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System.

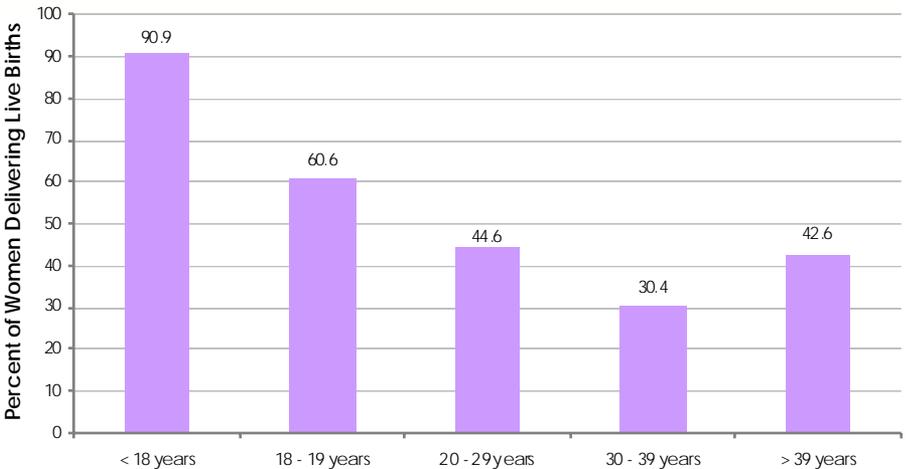
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## Unintended Pregnancies Among Women Delivering Live Births by Race and Year, Alaska, 1991-2000



Data Source: Alaska Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System, MCH Epidemiology Unit.

## Unintended Pregnancies Among Women Delivering Live Births by Age, Alaska, 2000



Data Source: Alaska Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System, MCH Epidemiology Unit.