

U.S. Maternal Mortality Decreased in 2023, Remains High Among Black Women

While the mortality rate decreased overall, the rate for Black women remains significantly higher than other groups.

February 11, 2025 By Laura Schmidt

In 2023, maternal [mortality](#) in the United States fell below pre-pandemic levels overall, but [racial gaps](#) widened, according to [data](#) from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Black women have the highest [maternal](#) mortality rate in the United States. In 2021 and 2022, Black women experienced a maternal death rate about 2.6 times higher than white women. The CDC includes in its maternal death figures women who died while pregnant, during childbirth and up to 42 days after giving birth.

In 2023, Black women died at a rate nearly 3.5 times higher than white women, [Maternal Mortality Rates in the United States, 2023](#) reports.

Overall, almost 670 U.S. women died during [pregnancy](#) or shortly after childbirth in 2023, a decrease from 817 deaths in 2022 and 1,205 in 2021.

According to the CDC report:

- The maternal death rate for white women decreased from 19 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2022 to 14.5 per 100,000 in 2023.
- For Black women, the rate increased slightly from 49.5 to just above 50, but the this was not statistically significant, according to the report.

- For Latinas, the rate dropped from about 17 to about 12.
- For Asian Americans, the rate fell from about 13 to about 11.

When it comes to [childbirth](#), maternal sepsis is a leading cause of maternal mortality in America, and Black women are twice as likely to develop the condition compared with white mothers. Excessive bleeding, blood vessel blockages and infections, including [COVID-19](#), are also leading causes of maternal deaths, according to The Associated Press (AP).

The new data suggest that the COVID-19 pandemic impacted all pregnant women, but “once we went back to ‘usual activities,’ then the impact of systemic racism and unequal access [to medical care]...came right back into place,” Amanda Williams, MD, MPH, interim medical director for the [March of Dimes](#), told [the AP](#).

Indeed, the report highlights that COVID-19’s impact on pregnancies declined as the pandemic diminished and hospitals and birthing centers returned to regular operations.

Additionally, the overall decrease in maternal deaths could be attributed to extended postpartum care now covered by the federal Medicaid program. By increasing postpartum care from just seven weeks to 12 months, new mothers are given time to focus on their own health and recovery. Experts also suggest that the decline in maternal deaths could be linked to the [U.S. birth rate reaching a historic low](#).

To read more about maternal mortality and health, click [#Mother](#) or [#Pregnancy](#). There, you’ll see headlines such as “[Deadly High Blood Pressure During Pregnancy Is on the Rise](#),” “[Examining Maternal Deaths in Black Mothers](#)” and “[Philadelphia Group Empowers New Black Moms to Breastfeed](#).”