

PRAM-O-GRAM

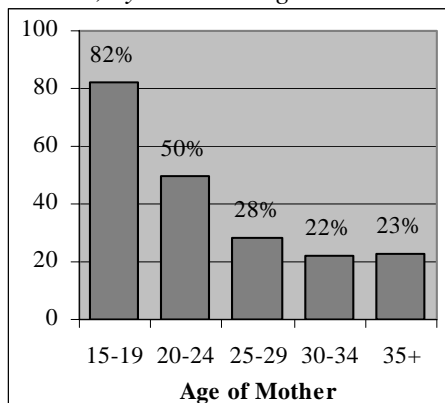
Fact Sheet Series: Number 2, 2007

Profile of Unintended Pregnancies

More than one-third of pregnancies in North Dakota in 2002 were unintended. The prevalence of unintended pregnancy was:

- **Age** – Higher among women ages 15 to 19 (82%) and 20 to 24 (50%) than women ages 25 to 29 (28%), 30 to 34 (22%), and 35 and older (23%) (see Figure 3).
- **Education** – Higher among women with less than a high school degree (67%) and a high school degree (49%) than women with some college (35%) and a college degree or more (22%).
- **Gravid status** – Higher among first-time mothers (42%) than mothers who already had children (32%).
- **Marital status** – Higher among unmarried women (75%) than married women (24%).
- **Race** – Higher among American Indian women (52%) than white women (35%).

Figure 3. Percentage of Pregnancies That Were Unintended in North Dakota, by Mother's Age: 2002



Pregnancy Intendedness

Pregnancy intendedness influences a woman's pregnancy experience and can affect the health of the infant.¹ In North Dakota in 2002, more than one in three mothers whose pregnancies resulted in live births reported that their pregnancies were unintended (36%); 30 percent said they wanted to be pregnant later (i.e., mistimed) and 6 percent said they did not want to be pregnant then or in the future (i.e., unwanted) (see Figure 1).

The nearly two-thirds of mothers whose pregnancies were intended included 46 percent who wanted to be pregnant then and 18 percent who wanted to be pregnant sooner. However, even mothers who said their pregnancies were intended were not necessarily trying to get pregnant; only 55 percent of mothers with intended pregnancies said they were trying.

Among the mothers who were not trying to get pregnant, less than half (45%) were doing something to keep from getting pregnant. Reasons for not using birth control included that they didn't mind if they got pregnant (43%), they thought they couldn't get pregnant at that time (19%), the husband/partner didn't want to use anything (17%), and they had side effects from the birth control methods they were using (11%).

These findings apply to the pregnancy intendedness of mothers who had live births, so do not include women who became pregnant and experienced fetal deaths or had induced terminations. In North Dakota, there were 9,443 pregnancies in 2006 (see Figure 2). The total number of pregnancies was composed of 8,616 live births, 50 fetal deaths, and 776 induced terminations.²

Figure 2. Number of Resident Pregnancies, Live Births, and Induced Terminations in North Dakota: 1998-2006²

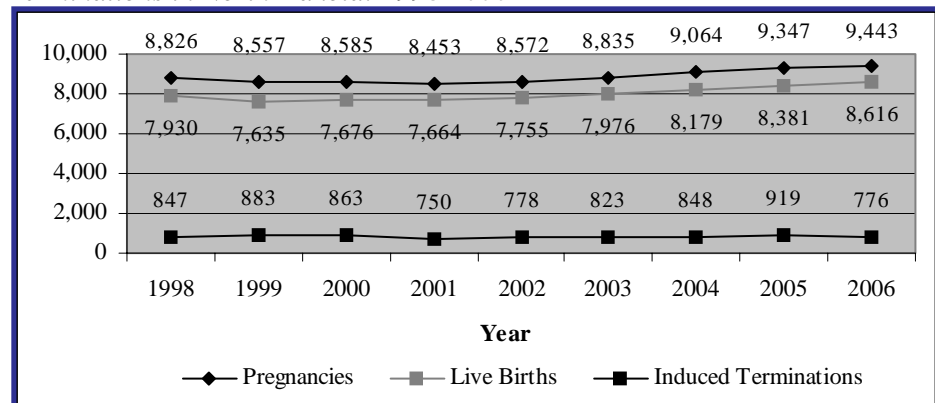
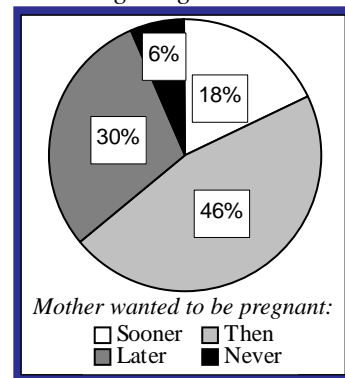


Figure 1. North Dakota Mother's Feelings About Becoming Pregnant: 2002



More information about the PRAMS program, North Dakota PRAMS 2002 data, and the PRAM-O-GRAM fact sheets is available online at www.ndsu.edu/sdc/ndprams.htm and www.ndhealth.gov.

What North Dakota mothers said about becoming pregnant:

“We wanted to be pregnant for 8 years!”

“I have endometriosis, I was on the pill and I got pregnant. I am thrilled that our daughter is here and healthy.”

“I felt too old.”

“I am a high school teacher and I see a lot of young girls who are pregnant and have no knowledge of how to care for babies.”

FAST FACTS About Risk Factors

Among women with unintended pregnancies, smaller proportions:

- Took **folic acid** (34% compared to 65% of intended).
- Had **health insurance** before the pregnancy (60% compared to 84% of intended).
- Started **prenatal care** on time (68% started in the first trimester compared to 85% of intended).
- Were **breastfeeding** at the time of the survey (29% compared to 44% of intended).

Among women with unintended pregnancies, larger proportions:

- Were **using alcohol** (73% compared to 61% of intended) and **binge drinking** (54% drank five or more drinks in one sitting compared to 29% of intended) in the three months before becoming pregnant.
- Were **smokers** in the three months before becoming pregnant (40% compared to 19% of intended).
- Were recipients of the Women, Infants, and Children (**WIC**) program during pregnancy (56% compared to 25% of intended).
- Were **Medicaid** recipients before or during the pregnancy (46% compared to 17% of intended).

Pregnancy Intendedness, continued

Greater Risk Among Women With Unintended Pregnancies

Pregnancy intendedness impacts the health of the infant because there is greater risk associated with women whose pregnancy is unintended. Risk factors for North Dakota women with mistimed or unwanted pregnancies in 2002 included (see *Fast Facts* at left for detailed data):

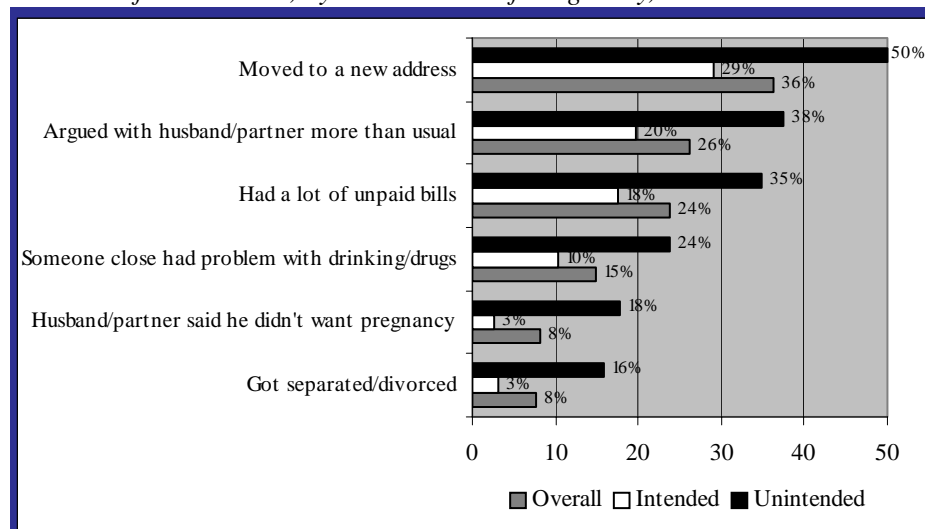
- Not taking folic acid or having health insurance before becoming pregnant, not starting prenatal care in the first trimester, and not still breastfeeding at the time of the survey.
- Using alcohol and binge drinking in the three months before becoming pregnant, being smokers before becoming pregnant, and being economically disadvantaged (i.e., recipients of the Medicaid program and the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program).

Major Stress Affecting Women With Unintended Pregnancies

More than four in five women with unintended pregnancies in North Dakota in 2002 experienced at least one of 13 major stressful events in the 12 months before the baby was born (83% compared to 66% of intended and 72% overall); 43 percent experienced three or more stresses (compared to 21% of intended and 28% overall). The most common stressful events were (see Figure 4):

- Moving (50% compared to 29% of intended and 36% overall).
- Arguing more with the husband/partner (38% compared to 20% of intended and 26% overall).
- Having bills they couldn't pay (35% compared to 18% of intended and 24% overall).
- Having someone close who had a bad problem with drinking or drugs (24% compared to 10% of intended and 15% overall).
- Having a husband/partner who didn't want the pregnancy (18% compared to 3% of intended and 8% overall).
- Getting a divorce (16% compared to 3% of intended and 8% overall).

Figure 4. Percentage of Mothers Who Experienced Stressful Events in the 12 Months Before the Birth, by Intendedness of Pregnancy, in North Dakota: 2002



Sources: Unless indicated otherwise, all data and quotes are North Dakota PRAMS, 2002: www.ndsu.edu/sdc/ndprams.htm; 1. “PRAMS and Unintended Pregnancy.” www.cdc.gov/PRAMS/UP.htm; 2. North Dakota Department of Health, Division of Vital Records. www.ndhealth.gov/vital/