

## Data Details - Birth Defects

### Interpreting the Data

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#### What these data tell us:

- These data can be used to determine number and rate of specific birth defects diagnosed in South Carolina children with an inpatient hospital stay through the child's second birthday.
- These data can be viewed by year and demographic characteristics (such as mother's age, race/ethnicity, and infant's gender) or geographic region of South Carolina.

#### What these data do not tell us:

- These data may not include birth defects among South Carolina residents if the child has never had an inpatient hospital stay in South Carolina.
- These data may not include birth defects that are diagnosed after a child's second birthday.
- These data cannot be added together to get the total number of children with birth defects since one child may have more than one diagnosed defect.

### Limitations of the data

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These data only give us information about mother and child characteristics during pregnancy and around the time of the diagnosis of the birth defect(s). Follow-up data collection is not done for children diagnosed with birth defects. Therefore, these data cannot be used to determine the long-term impact of birth defects in South Carolina.

Data collection is continual and is not complete until two years after the data year. For example, 2008 birth defects data was still being collected until the end of 2010. Therefore, any data that is less than "two years old" is still subject to change and should only be reported as provisional data. Most birth defects are diagnosed

within the first year of a baby's life. So in the interest of providing timely information, data that is subject to change may be added if South Carolina Birth Defects Program staff feels that it is nearly complete. All such data will be clearly marked as PROVISIONAL (SUBJECT TO CHANGE).

Many birth defects are rare. In fact, some birth defects are so rare that fewer than 5 cases occur within certain subgroups in a year. The South Carolina Birth Defects Program and the South Carolina Environmental Public Health Tracking program want to be certain that there is not a way for an individual or family affected by a birth defect to be identified by the numbers reported on this site. Therefore, if fewer than 5 birth defects occurred in a year within a subgroup, the actual number of birth defects will not be displayed on this website. Instead, the table or map will show that <5 (fewer than five) birth defects were diagnosed in this subgroup for infants born in that year and a rate will not be reported.

## About these measurements

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### Measures included

South Carolina birth defects data are presented in two ways:

1. The number (frequency) of birth defects observed among infants born in a year
2. The rate of birth defects among all live births in a year

### Frequency of measurement

Data collection for birth defects diagnosed in South Carolina is ongoing from the child's birth until his/her second birthday. Therefore, South Carolina Birth Defects data cannot be finalized until two years have passed from the end of the data year. For example, 2008 birth defects data was still being collected until the end of 2010.

### Interpretation of rates

A birth defect rate should be interpreted as the number of birth defects diagnosed for every 10,000 live births delivered in South Carolina. For example, a rate of 2.4

for spina bifida in 2008 can be interpreted as: “Out of every 10,000 live births in South Carolina in 2008, 2.4 babies were diagnosed with spina bifida.”

## Calculation Methods

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Frequencies of birth defects are the number of each type of birth defect that was diagnosed in a South Carolina hospital for infants that were born, had a stillbirth, or had an induced termination of pregnancy (abortion) in that year. The diagnosis could have been made during pregnancy (for example, through an ultrasound or a genetic test) or after birth.