

Low Birthweight Babies

Why does low birthweight matter?

- Birthweight is an important indicator of an infant's health and likely survival. Nationally, 3 out of 5 infant deaths are due to low weight at birth (ie. weighing less than 5.5 lbs or 2,500 grams at birth).
- Low birthweight babies account for more than half of all costs incurred for newborns.
- Low-birthweight babies surviving infancy have a greater likelihood of cognitive and developmental delays. They experience greater health risks and disabilities during their childhood and adolescence. They also face higher adult-onset health risks, such as heart disease, diabetes, hypertension, stroke, and osteoporosis.
- Most likely to be born at low-birthweight are babies of women who generally lack health insurance or regular prenatal health care: mothers who are young (under age 25), or who are high school dropouts, or who are low-income or in poverty. These mothers are also most likely to lack consistent access to health care that's adequate to address their infants' continuing health concerns.

*Definition: **Low birthweight** is the portion of infants born alive weighing under 2,500 grams (5.5 pounds) compared to the total number of live births.*

What's the situation in the US Virgin Islands?

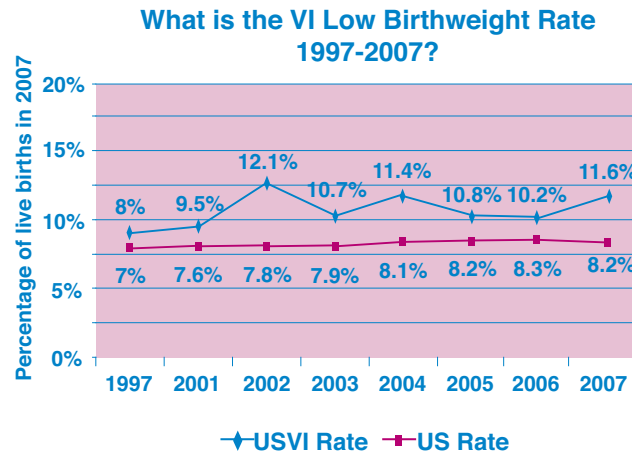
- Low birthweight continues to be a major concern in the VI.
- 11.6% (205 babies) were low birthweight out of 1,771 live births in 2007 (up from 10.3% or 180 babies in '06).

- **St. Croix:** 9.6%, or 77 babies (3 more than in '06) out of 799 live births
- **St. Thomas/St. John:** 13.2%, or 128 babies (22 more than in '06) out of 972 live births

What's the low birthweight rate in the nation?

- 8.2%¹

¹ Center for Disease Control: http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr56/nvsr56_07.pdf



Low birthweight babies – how do we compare?

US national low birth-weight rate	Rate of best-ranked state, #1: AK	Rate of worst-ranked state, #50: MS	Rate of Puerto Rico (rank #51)	Rate of USVI (rank #49)	What does the VI rate mean?	VI rate last year (2006)	Did the VI improve from last year?	To improve by 10%
8.2%	6%	12.4%	13%	11.6%	205 low birthweight babies were born in 2007, out of 1,771 live births.	10.2%	No - the rate rose. 25 more babies	21 fewer low birthweight babies

Infant Mortality

Why does infant mortality matter?

Infant mortality rate is considered to measure a community's "quality of life." It reflects:

- the community's safety
- the economic well-being of families
- the emotional/physical health of mothers
- the family involvement and support by fathers
- effectiveness of community health systems
- the accessibility and effectiveness of maternal and infant services
- At highest risk of death are babies born at low birthweight, and those lacking adequate nutrition, safe living conditions, or adequate health care (for mother or infant).
- Community poverty is a significant risk-factor for infants. Infant mortality rates are 50% higher for infants born into poor families than for babies born into families living above the poverty level.

Definition: Infant mortality is the number of deaths occurring to infants under one year old per 1,000 live births.

What's the situation in the US Virgin Islands?

- 12 infant deaths in 2007 (4 more than in '06) represent a rate of 6.8 deaths per thousand live births.
- The VI infant mortality rate equals the national rate for 2007.

Note: While the VI small sample size reduces the likelihood of seeing a trend, it is worth noting that since 1997 the VI infant mortality rate has remained low, compared to the national rate.

What's the infant mortality rate in the nation?

- 6.8 infant deaths per 1000 live births, in 2007.¹

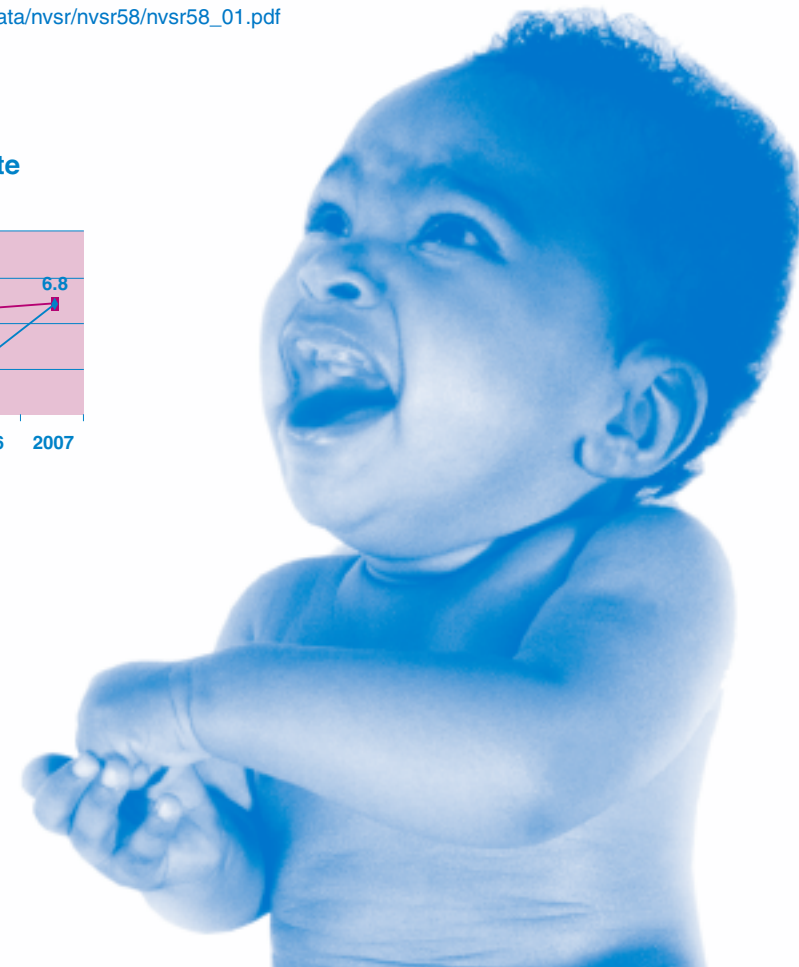
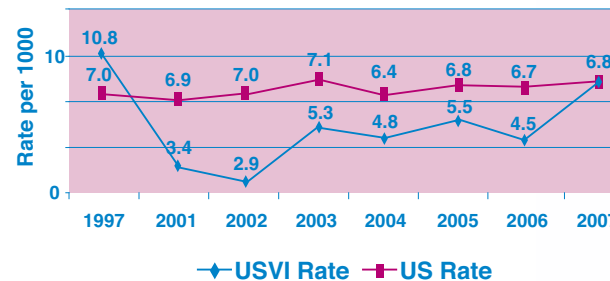
By island.

- **St Croix:** 6.3 infant deaths per 1000 live births (5 deaths occurred in 2007).
- **St Thomas/St. John:** 7.2 infant deaths per 1000 live births (7 deaths occurred).

Note: VI rates must be interpreted with caution because small fluctuations in absolute numbers can have very large effects on the calculated rates.

¹ Center for Disease Control: http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr58/nvsr58_01.pdf

What is the VI Infant Mortality Rate 1997-2007?



Child Maltreatment

Why does child abuse and neglect matter?

- Child abuse and neglect have devastating consequences – physical, emotional and behavioral — extending from childhood into adulthood.
- Youth compromised by early abuse or maltreatment are more likely than their peers to suffer depression, and to engage in high risk behaviors: inappropriate aggression, unsafe sex, drug use, alcoholism, and attempted suicide. A formerly-battered child is also more likely to become an abusive parent to his or her own children, continuing a cycle of damage.
- The community also bears costs. These range from increased demands on the public health, safety and welfare systems during the lifetime of the abused child, to the loss of adult citizen potential.

What's the situation in the US Virgin Islands?

- 380 maltreated children were reported by the VI Department of Human Services in 2007, referred for physical abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect (up from 348 children in 2006).¹
- The VI child maltreatment rate is 13.6 per thousand children, age birth through seventeen (up from 12.1 in 2006).²
- **St. Croix:** 229 child cases reported (up from 194 in 2006), a rate of 15.5/1,000
- **St. Thomas/St. John:** 151 cases (up slightly from 154), a rate of 11.5/1,000.

What is the child maltreatment rate in the nation?

- 10.6 per 1,000 children.³

Residential Care.

- 95 children (down from 123 in 2006) are currently placed by the VI Department of Human Services in on- and off-island Residential Care facilities: 68 are in on-island facilities, 27 in off-island facilities.

Foster Care.

- 101 children were placed temporarily into foster care (unchanged from 2006). Of these, most (98 placements) were due to abuse or neglect:
- **St Croix:** 56 children
- **St Thomas/St. John:** 42 children.
- 57% of all placements were boys; 43% were girls.
- One fifth (21%) of children placed in foster care were under age 5; half (51%) were age 5-12, and 28% were age 13 or older.
- 93% of children placed in foster care were from single-parent families.
- Children placed in foster care were characterized as coming from homes reported for domestic violence and substance abuse, and also as having a need for remedial schooling.
- 35% of children placed in foster care came from families that were not low-income; 65% came from low-income families.

1 Child abuse and neglect cases are routinely under-reported in the USVI, as acknowledged by members of territorial not-for-profit and government agencies working in the field of child abuse and neglect. The number of maltreated children, therefore, is likely higher than documented, and the negative impact on the community is likely greater than the figures can show.

2 The VI Department of Human Services takes referrals for child abuse and neglect through age seventeen. The child population up to age eighteen in 2007 was 27,903 children.

3 <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/pubs/cm07/chapter3.htm#subjects>

*Definition: **Child abuse and neglect** numbers reflect children age birth up to eighteen years old reported to the VI Department of Human Services as victims of physical or sexual child abuse or neglect, per 1,000 children. These numbers do not include children who are in foster care, who may have been placed due to abuse or neglect.*

*Definition: **Foster care** numbers reflect children removed under the authority of the VI Department of Human Services from the custody of a parent or caregiver due to abuse or neglect, and placed temporarily with a family who will provide care.*

Child maltreatment – how do we compare to last year?

US national child maltreatment rate	Rate of USVI	What does the VI rate mean?	VI rate last year (2006)	Did the VI improve from last year?	To improve by 10%
10.6/1,000	13.6/1,000	2380 children reported in '07 for physical/sexual abuse or neglect, out of 27,903 children	12/1,000	No - the rate rose. 32 more children	38 fewer maltreated children

Child Deaths

Why do child deaths matter?

- The death rate of children (from age one to fourteen) reflects the overall emotional and physical health of children within a community. At highest risk are children who are poor, disabled, minority, male (or these traits in combination).¹
- The child death rate is also a measure of the community's commitment to the safety of its children. Community-based actions to prevent fatal childhood accidents include strengthening access to good child health care, as well as ensuring safe environments in schools, childcare centers, playgrounds, and public housing.

¹ Report to the Nation: Trends in unintentional childhood injury mortality, 1987-2000. (2003). Washington, DC: National SAFE KIDS Campaign

² www.kidscount.org. Child death rate cited is for 2006. 2007 rates were still deemed preliminary at press-time.

*Definition: **Child deaths** - the number of deaths to children between the ages of 1 and 14, per 100,000 children. Deaths from all causes, including illness and injury are included in this figure.*

What's the situation in the US Virgin Islands?

- 21,707 children age 1-14 lived in the territory in 2007 (90 fewer children than in 2006).
- 11 children died in 2007 (4 more than in 2006, or a 57% increase)
- **St Croix:** 5 child deaths (in a child population of 11,727)
- **St Thomas/St. John:** 6 child deaths (in a child population of 9,980)
- Eleven is the highest number of child deaths recorded since 2001 (when 10 deaths occurred in a much larger population of 26,667 children age 1-14. Since 2001, the number of children in this age group has dropped 19%).
- The VI child death rate was 50.7 per 100,000 children (a dramatic rise from last year's rate of 30.8/100,000). This large spike represents the significant increase in the number of child deaths reported for 2007, and fewer children in this age group than last year.

What's the child death rate in the nation?

- 19 per 100,000 children²

Child deaths – how do we compare to last year?

US national child death rate	Rate of USVI:	What does the VI rate mean?	VI rate last year (2006)	Did the VI improve from last year?	To improve by 10%
19/100,000	51/100,000	11 children died in 2007, out of 21,707 children age 1-14	31/100,000	No - the rate rose. 4 more deaths	1 less child death



Juvenile Crime Arrests

Why do juvenile crime arrests matter?

- The teen years are a time to learn positive behaviors, and build positive peer associations. If youth get arrest records for violent or illegal acts instead, their life options -- especially educational and employment prospects -- can become irrevocably limited.
- Juvenile offenders' illegal activities endanger their own and their peers' lives, their families' well-being, and the stability of their neighborhoods.
- Juvenile offenders' communities are diminished by loss of youth citizen productivity and success, and loss of general safety.
- Juveniles' antisocial crime activity brings further losses to their community, through public costs for youth remediation, adjudication, and possible later incarceration.

What's the situation in the US Virgin Islands?

Juvenile violent crime.

- The territory's youth population age 10-17 numbered 14,653 in 2007.
- The VI juvenile crime arrest rate climbed to 539 per 100,000 youth (from 499/100,000 in 2006).
- Arrests for juvenile violent crime (homicide, rape, robbery, aggravated assault)* rose 7% in 2007** to 79 arrests (up from 74 in 2006) for youth age 10-17.
- **St. Croix:** 34 arrests (down from 38 in 2006) represented a 438/100,000 juvenile violent crime arrest rate. One arrest was for murder, 4 for rape, 10 for robbery and 19 for aggravated assault.
- **St. Thomas/St. John:** 45 arrests (up from 36 in 2006) represented a 652/100,000 rate. Four arrests were for rape, 11 for robbery, and 30 for aggravated assault (none for murder).

What's the juvenile violent crime arrest rate in the nation? 301 per 100,000 youth.¹

Juvenile property crime.

- The VI juvenile property crime arrest rate was 594/100,000 youth, representing 87 youth arrests.
- St. Croix: 72 youth arrests... St. Thomas/St. John: 15 youth arrests

* For purposes of accurate comparison, KIDS COUNT reports data figures reflecting only violent crime Part 1 Felony offenses: homicide, forcible rape, robbery and aggravated assault.

**Arrest records are reported for the fiscal year 2007, from October 2006 - September 2007.

1 U.S. Dept. of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Juvenile Justice Bulletin (April 2009). Juvenile Arrests 2007, page 11. <http://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/ojjdp/225344.pdf>

*Definition: **Juvenile violent crime arrests** are the number of arrests of youth age 10 to 17 for Part 1 indexed violent offenses per 100,000 youths. Part 1 offenses include homicide, rape, robbery and aggravated assault. **Juvenile property crime arrests** are for offenses including burglary, larceny/theft, auto theft, arson, and destruction of property.*

Juvenile violent crime arrests – how do we compare to last year?

US juvenile violent crime arrest rate	Rate of USVI	What does the VI rate mean?	VI rate last year (2006)	Did the improve from last year?	To improve by 10%
301/100,000	539/100,000	79 youth arrests for homicide, rape, robbery and assault, out of 14,653 youth age 10-17	499/100,000	No the rate rose. more arrests	8 fewer youth violent crime arrests

Teen Deaths

Why do teen deaths matter?

- Research shows that a teen's brain (especially its frontal cortex, the area governing judgment and impulse control) isn't fully formed until age twenty-five.¹ In adolescence, teens' inclinations to take risks are not yet balanced by their brain's ability to assess the consequences of those risks – leading many youth to embrace behavior that can end their life.
- Most teens age 15-19 die from preventable causes. Car accidents are the highest cause of death; most often the driver is a teen. Gun violence (homicide, suicide, or firearms accident) represents the second-highest cause of teen death.
- Strong "engagements" help protect youth against fatal-risk behaviors. These can include involvement with family members and other caring adults, or with school, religious groups, extracurricular activities or organized sports.
Family mental health services geared to adolescents can provide youth with further resources, and can help address issues such as anger, aggression and depression.

*Definition: **Teen deaths** by accident, homicide or suicide is the number of deaths to teenagers between the ages of 15 and 19 due to these causes, per 100,000 population.*

What's the situation in the US Virgin Islands?

- 8,138 teens age 15-19 lived in the territory (396 fewer teens of this age than in 2006).
- 10 teens died in 2007 (the same number as in 2006): 4 in **St. Croix** and 6 in **St. Thomas/St. John**. The cause of deaths is unavailable.
- The VI teen death rate was 122.9 per 100,000 teens age 15 – 19 (up from 117.2/100,000 in 2006). The increased rate is due to fewer adolescents in this age group.

What's the teen death rate in the nation?

- 64 per 100,000 teens² ...virtually half of the Virgin Islands' rate.

Note: Although small absolute numbers for child or teen death in the Virgin Islands lead to large variation in rates that are population based, an absolute number of ten USVI teen deaths is alarming.

1 National Institute of Mental Health, Giedd JN, Lalonde FM, Celano MJ, White SL, Wallace GL, Lee NR, Lenroot RK, "Anatomical brain magnetic resonance imaging of typically developing children and adolescents." J Am Acad Child Adolescent Psychiatry. 48(5):465-70, 2009; http://newsinhealth.nih.gov/2005/September2005/docs/01features_02.htm.

2 Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2009 Kids Count Data Book (2009). Most-recent national teen death rate available is for 2006.

Teen deaths – how do we compare to last year?

US national teen death rate	Rate of USVI	What does the VI rate mean?	VI rate last year (2006)	Did the VI improve from last year?	To improve by 10%
64/100,000	123/100,000	10 teen deaths in 2007, out of 8,138 teens age 15-19	117/100,000	No - the rate rose.	1 less teen death

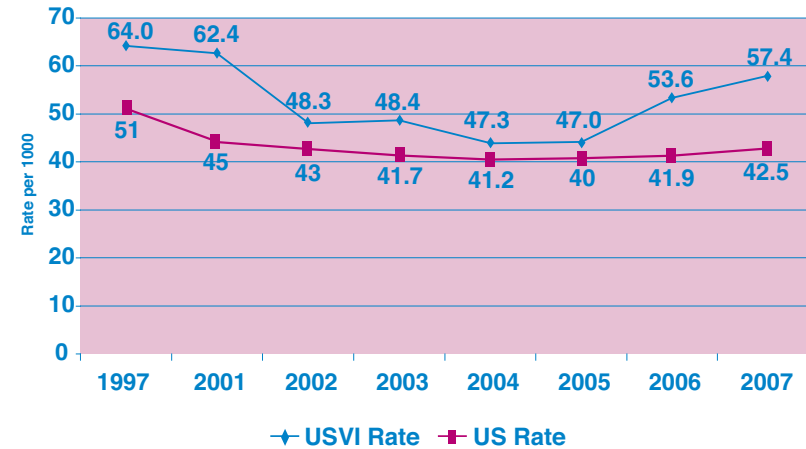
Births to Teens

Why do teen births matter?

- Teenage pregnancy and parenthood continue to be major concerns threatening the development of teens and their children.
- Teen parents are more likely to lack sufficient developmental maturity and skills to consistently and adequately care for their children. They are also more likely to lack the educational skills necessary for well-paying jobs over their lifetimes (nationally, 2/3 of teen mothers do not finish high school).¹ Generally, teen mothers are more likely than their peers to be or become unemployed (an estimated 80 percent go on welfare during their lives).²
- Children of teen parents are more likely to have health concerns, to have behavior and learning problems in school, to drop out before graduating, and to become teen parents themselves -- in a cycle that repeats and extends the early childbirth risk.

Definition: Births to teens is the number of births to teenagers between the ages of 15 and 19 per 1,000 females in this age group.

What is the VI Teen Birth Rate, 1997-2007?



Source for US rate: Kids Count Data Center, Teen births by age group: rate per 1,000...
http://kidscount.org/datacenter/compare_results.jsp?i=10&dt=4&rt=2&yr=6&va=a&s=a&dtype=&x=142&y=7

What 3 Birth Characteristics increase a Child's Risk of Child Poverty?

1. Being born to a teenage mother
2. Being born to a mother who has not completed high school
3. Being born to a mother who never married

What is the Cumulative Effect of these Risk Factors on Child Poverty?

Number of Risk Factors	Child Poverty Rate
No risk factors*	9%
One risk factor	32%
Two risk factors	54%
All three risk factors	78%

*"No risk factors" is defined as a child born to a currently married woman over age 20 who graduated from high school.

Source: analysis of the 2000 Census 1 percent Public Use Microdata Sample. Kids Count Data Book, State Profiles of Child Well-Being. 2004 The Annie E. Casey Foundation, Baltimore, MD.

Births to Teens, cont.

What's the situation in the US Virgin Islands?

- The rate of babies born to VI teen girls age 15-19 is on the rise after falling for almost a decade since 1997.
- The VI teen birth rate is 57.4 births per thousand girls age 15-19 (an increase of 7%, from 53.6 per thousand in 2006).
- 226 babies were born to teen mothers, representing almost 13% of the 1771 total live births in 2007.
- While 21 fewer teen births occurred than in the previous year, teen birth rates rose, because of a smaller population of VI girls age 15-19 than in 2006.
- There were 3,936 girls age 15-19 in 2007, a drop of 671 girls from the previous year (242 fewer girls in St. Croix and 429 fewer girls in St. Thomas/St. John).³

What's the teen birth rate in the nation? 42.5 per thousand.⁴

By island.

- **St. Croix:** a teen birth rate of 64.3 per 1000 (up from 62.3/1000 in 2006) represented 130 teen births within a population of 2,021 girls age 15-19 (11 fewer births than in 2006).
- **St. Thomas/St. John:** a teen birth rate of 50.1 per 1000, (up from 45.2/1000 in 2006) represented 96 teen births in a population of 1,915 girls age 15-19 (10 fewer births than in 2006).

1 National Commission on Children, 1991. Beyond Rhetoric: A New American Agenda for Children and Families, US Government Printing Office, Washington, DC

2 US Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1998. Longitudinal Survey of Youth, 1997, Washington, DC.

3 2007 VI Community Survey

4 Center for Disease Control: http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr57/nvsr57_12.pdf

Teen births – how do we compare?

US national teen birth rate	Rate of best-ranked state, #1: NH	Rate of worst-ranked state, #50: MS	Rate of Puerto Rico (rank #45)	Rate of USVI (rank #44)	What does the VI rate mean?	VI rate last year (2006)	Did the VI improve from last year?	To improve by %
42.5/1000	19/1000	68/1000	60/1000	57.4/1000	226 babies born to VI teen girls in a population of 3,936 girls age 15-19, in 2007.	54.6/1000	No – the rate rose.	ewer babies teen births