

Teen Pregnancy in the United States

[Announcer] This podcast is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. CDC - safer, healthier people.

[Kathy Maddox] Welcome to this CDC women's health podcast about teen pregnancy. I'm your host, Kathy Maddox. The teen birth rate is on the rise in the United States. Stephanie Ventura, with CDC's Reproductive Statistics Branch, is joining me by phone today to talk about the upward trend of teen pregnancy in the U.S. Welcome, Stephanie.

[Stephanie Ventura] Thank you, Kathy.

[Kathy Maddox] Stephanie, tell us about the trend of teen pregnancy in the U.S.

[Stephanie Ventura] Our latest data show that the teen birth rate in the U.S. increased in 2007 for the second year in a row. The rate had dropped 34 percent between 1991 and 2005. It's important to note that the latest data are for births, not pregnancies.

[Kathy Maddox] Do you know why the teen birth rate is going up?

[Stephanie Ventura] Until recently, we had been seeing a decline in teen sexual activity and an increase in condom use among teens, which contributed to the decrease in teen births. At this point, we really don't know what's causing the increase. We need to find out if it's because of changes in teen sexual activity and contraceptive use or if it's more of a reflection of changes in values and attitudes about becoming a parent while still a teenager. There could also be other factors involved. We'll be doing more studies to answer those questions.

[Kathy Maddox] Should policymakers and others view this data as a sign that policies and programs need to be changed or reviewed?

[Stephanie Ventura] Those decisions are difficult to make without new data on sexual activity and contraceptive use, as well as evaluations of the current teen pregnancy prevention programs. Fortunately, new data on teen sexual behavior and contraceptive use will be available soon, and then prevention strategies can be developed accordingly.

[Kathy Maddox] Thank you, Stephanie, for explaining the trend of teen pregnancy. For more information on statistics, including teen births, please visit www.cdc.gov/nchs. For more information on women's health, visit www.cdc.gov/women. For CDC, I'm Kathy Maddox.

[Announcer] For the most accurate health information, visit www.cdc.gov, or call 1-800-CDC-INFO, 24/7.