

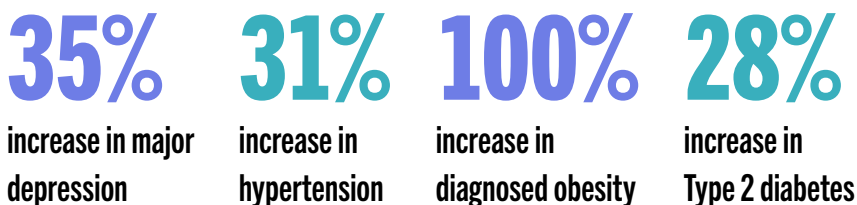
Understanding millennial health and pregnancy

Millennials make up 85 percent of all pregnancies, and while most will experience a healthy pregnancy, a recent analysis of Blue Cross Blue Shield (BCBS) data shows this generation is experiencing some of the highest increases in health conditions that could lead to higher risks of pregnancy and childbirth complications.

Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield and **Count the Kicks**[®] partnered for a **Millennial Health and Pregnancy** webinar on March 9, 2021, to use BCBS data to educate expectant parents and health care providers about important millennial health pregnancy trends and navigating pregnancy during COVID-19. Read on to see highlights from the data and presentations.

Millennial health before pregnancy

Prior to pregnancy, millennials are experiencing significant, double-digit increases in the prevalence of multiple health and behavioral health conditions. BCBS's **Trends in Pregnancy and Childbirth Complications in the U.S.** revealed the following trends:

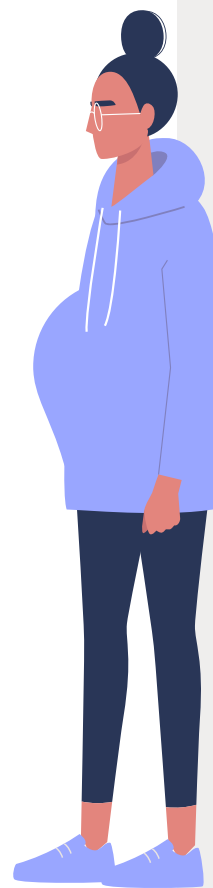


WHO ARE MILLENNIALS?

Millennials — those born between 1981 and 1996 — now total more than 83 million and account for more than a quarter of the U.S. population according to the U.S. Census Bureau.



Listen to the **Millennial Health and Pregnancy** webinar recording



Chronic conditions' impact on pregnancy and childbirth complications

Having chronic conditions before and during pregnancy may lead to higher risks of pregnancy and childbirth complications. While 80 percent of expectant parents have healthy pregnancies and deliveries, rates of complications for conditions like gestational diabetes and preeclampsia are rising according to BCBS data. For childbirth, rates of almost all complications increased by double digits.

16%

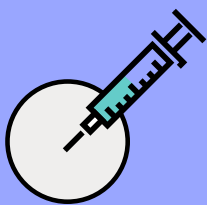
rise in pregnancy complications

14%

rise in childbirth complications

7 out of 1,000

pregnant women experienced both kinds of complications



As COVID-19 vaccines become more readily available, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists recommend those who are pregnant or breastfeeding consider vaccination in consultation with their physician.

Pregnancy during COVID-19

Regular visits to a health care provider are especially important for an expectant parent or those who plan to become pregnant. However, prenatal and postnatal care plans changed for a majority of people due to COVID-19 with many shifting their planned care, according to a 2020 BCBS survey:

25%

Skipped prenatal appointments since the start of the pandemic

28%

Delivered at a different hospital than originally planned

20%

Missed their postnatal appointment because of shelter-in-place restrictions

Wellmark's chief medical officer, Dr. Tim Gutshall, stresses the importance of staying on track with prenatal care and postpartum appointments including using virtual visits when in-person appointments aren't an option.

The rise of postpartum depression

According to BCBS, the diagnosis of postpartum depression (PPD) has increased almost 30 percent since 2014. Some of this increase could be attributed to a greater awareness of the condition and more screening. The top pre-existing behavioral health conditions of those who were diagnosed with PPD include:

64%

experienced anxiety

20%

suffered from major depression

5%

had substance use disorder



Resources for a healthy pregnancy

Even in uncertain times, protecting the health and well-being of those who are expecting and current parents is vital to preserve the health of future generations. Follow these tips to plan and manage your pregnancy:



MONITOR YOUR PREGNANCY

Use the **Count the Kicks® app** to track your baby's normal movement pattern. A daily text feature will remind you when it's time to start counting. The app also helps to monitor baby movement so you can contact your health care provider if you notice changes.



KNOW YOUR RESOURCES

Wellmark offers its members a comprehensive pregnancy support program to ensure expectant and new parents receive the education, care and screenings needed for a healthy, stress-free pregnancy.



ACCESS QUALITY CARE

Access quality maternity care by using **Blue Distinction Centers** and **Blue Distinction Centers+** for maternity care. These centers are recognized for their demonstrated expertise in delivering high-quality, cost-effective care and in the case of maternal care, they also demonstrate a lower percentage of early elective deliveries.



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