

7.8% of all babies in Washtenaw County were born with low birth weight.

## What is low birth weight and why is it important?

Low birth weight (LBW) is when a baby is born weighing less than 2500 grams or 5.5 lbs.

There are about 3800 babies born in Washtenaw County each year. Nearly 300 babies, about 7.8%, are born with LBW in Washtenaw County each year. In Michigan overall, about 8.4% of births are. Low birth weight is often an indicator that other disparities exist within a population. Despite best efforts, progress in reducing LBW rate has been slow.

## Low birth weight puts a baby at increased risk of health concerns in infancy and later in life.

### Infancy

- Immediate and extended ventilation
- NICU
- Infant mortality

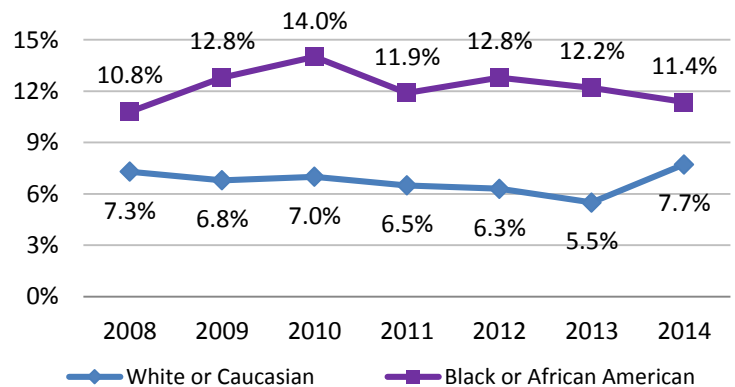
### Adolescence and Adulthood

- High blood pressure
- Obesity
- Diabetes
- Heart disease

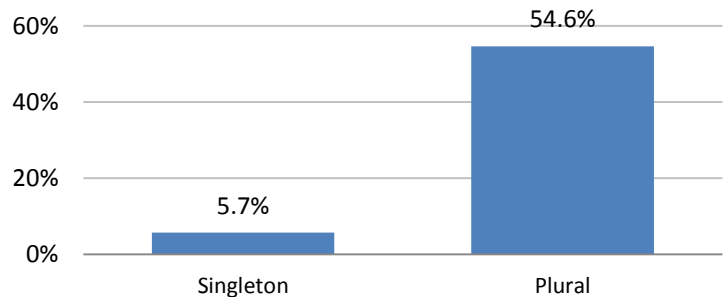
## What are risks associated with low birth weight?

- Having plural births (twins or more) significantly increases the likelihood of low birth weight.
- African American mothers have the highest rates of low birth weight.
  - It is a goal in Washtenaw County to reduce LBW in African American infants to 3% by 2020.
- Babies born to young mothers, especially teens, are more likely to have LBW.
- Poverty and low education levels are also risks for LBW babies.
- Smoking during pregnancy nearly doubles the risk of having a low birth weight baby.
- Having the baby prematurely, earlier than 37 weeks, is also a large risk of LBW.

**Low Birthweight Rate**  
Washtenaw County 2008-2014



**Rate of Low Birth Weight**  
Singleton and Plural Pregnancies  
Washtenaw County 2008-2013



Data Source: MDHHS Vital Records

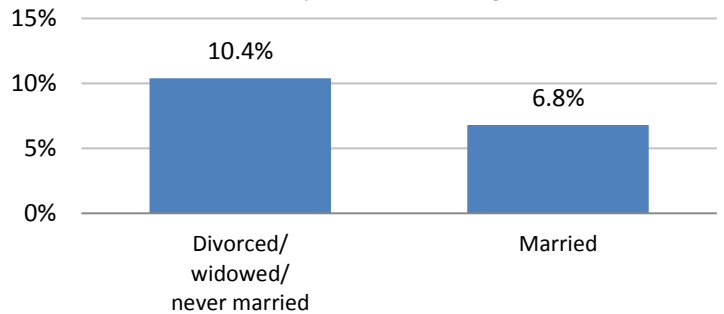
# Low Birth Weight is an indicator of disparities

Chronic stress may put mothers at higher risk of having a low birth weight baby.

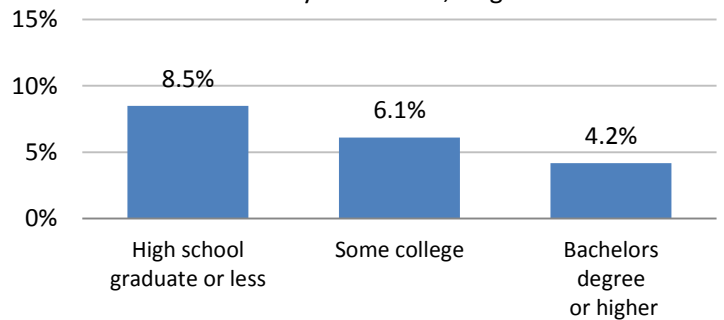
- Single mothers have higher rates of babies with low birth weight.
- Rates of LBW in babies decrease as mothers achieve higher levels of education.
  - Mothers without any college education are twice as likely as mothers with at least one college degree to have a baby with low birth weight.

**Good News:** In Washtenaw County, the number of women who gave birth when they were between 14 and 18 years old decreased from 1.7% of births in 2008 to 0.8% of births in 2013.

**Low Birth Weight by Marital Status**  
Washtenaw County 2008-2013, Singleton births\*

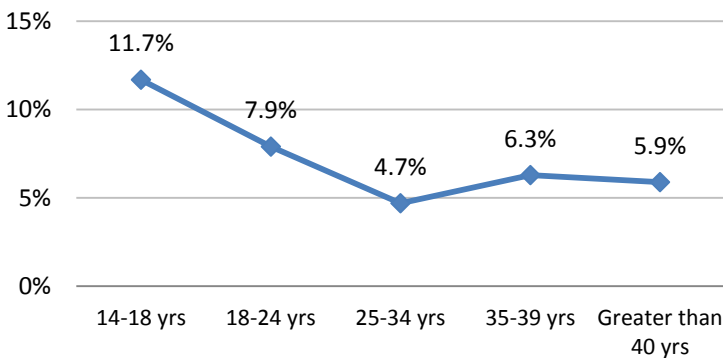


**Low Birth Weight by Education of Mother**  
Washtenaw County 2008-2013, Singleton births\*



**Low Birth Weight by Age of Mother**

Washtenaw County 2008-2013, Singleton only

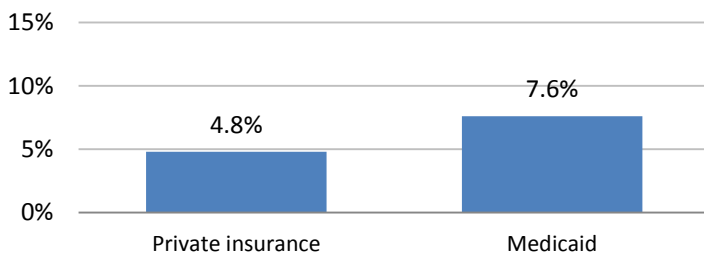


Younger mothers have the highest risk of low birth weight.

- Moms who are 25 to 35 years old have the lowest risk of having LBW babies.
- After 35 years, risk of low birth weight increases again, though it doesn't reach levels observed for moms who are less than 25 years.

**Low Birth Weight by Health Insurance**

Washtenaw County 2008-2013, Singleton births\*



Mothers living in poverty are more likely to have a low birth weight baby.

- Medicaid coverage is used as proxy for poverty.

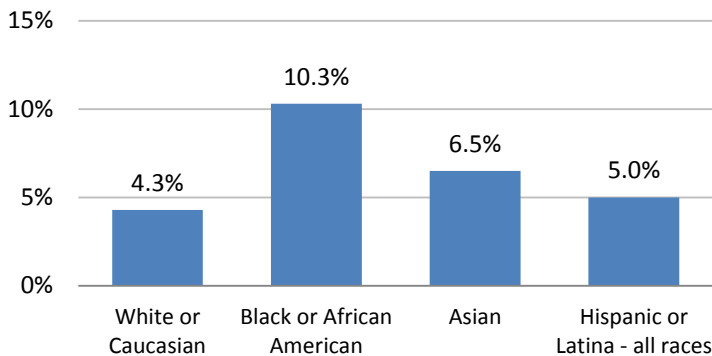
Data Source: MDHHS Vital Records

\*Having a plural birth (twins or more) significantly increases the likelihood of LBW. Analysis was done in singleton births only.

## African American moms have higher rates of low birth weight infants

### Low Birth Weight by Race and Ethnicity of Mother

Washtenaw County 2008-2013, Singleton births\*



Babies born to African American moms are more than twice as likely to have LBW than babies born to Caucasian moms.

- This risk remains regardless of disparities in poverty, education or age.
- It is a goal in Washtenaw County to reduce LBW in African American infants to 3% by 2020.
- There is moderate risk of LBW for babies in some Asian subpopulations, including Asian Indian and Filipino (not shown).

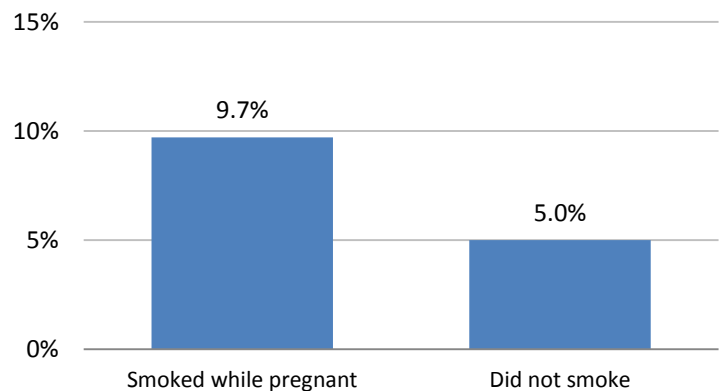
## Smoking increases risk of low birth weight infants

Pregnant women who smoke are nearly twice as likely to have a low birth weight baby than women who don't smoke.

- Smoking may limit the baby's growth in pregnancy.
- Smoking also increases the risk for premature birth and other negative outcomes
- For more information maternal smoking in Washtenaw County, please visit the [Infant Mortality](#) page on ewashtenaw.org.

### Low Birth Weight by Gestational Smoking

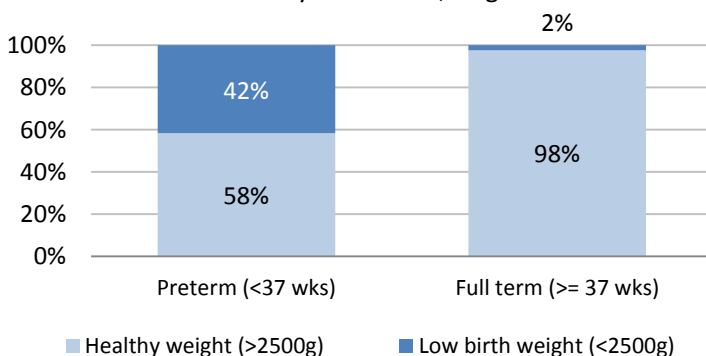
Washtenaw County 2008-2013, Singleton births\*



## Babies born too early are more likely to have low birth weight

### Low Birth Weight by Prematurity (<37 wks)

Washtenaw County 2008-2013, Singleton births\*



Many babies who are born prematurely (<37 weeks gestation) are also born with low birth weight. The risk factors for both prematurity and low birth weight are similar.

- 42% of babies born prematurely were also born with low birth weight.
- Only 2% of babies who were born full term were born with low birth weight.