

# **Our Health in Renfrew County and District**

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**Perinatal Statistics  
1999-2001**



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# **Renfrew County and District Health Unit Perinatal Statistics 1999-2001**

## **Introduction**

The Renfrew County and District Health Unit participates in the Perinatal Partnership Program of Eastern and Southeastern Ontario (PPESO). The PPESO was initiated in 1999 and is aimed at providing optimum perinatal care of childbearing families, improving health and achieving excellent perinatal health outcomes.

The PPESO has developed and maintains a database that contains data on all births in Eastern Ontario hospitals. The data are entered into the database by hospital staff on a daily basis, therefore the statistics that can be generated from this database are very timely, much more so than those generated from vital statistics provided by the Ontario Registrar General.

Data are regularly collected by PPESO partners on a variety of variables related to maternal, newborn and perinatal care characteristics. Much of the data pertains to medical techniques and interventions used during the birth process. However, data about birth weight, gestational age, maternal age, smoking status and intention to breastfeed are also collected, and these data are of particular relevance to public health programs. The current report is a summary of the data that are relevant to public health goals and objectives, for mothers and their babies from the Renfrew County and District Health Unit for the three-year period, 1999 – 2001.

Perinatal data for the years 1999, 2000, and 2001 have been compiled from three sources. The 1999 data were compiled and analysed in a report by the Health Information Partnership Eastern Ontario Region (1). Data for the year 2000 were compiled and distributed by the Perinatal Partnership (2). 2001 data were compiled directly from the Perinatal Database (3).

## **Overview of Data**

Perinatal data for the three-year period are summarized in Tables 1 and 2. Table 1 on page 4 summarizes data on babies, while Table 2 on page 5 summarizes data on mothers.

**Table 1: Perinatal Data on Babies from Renfrew County and District Health Unit, 1999- 2001**

	Year		
	1999	2000	2001
<b>Baby Characteristics</b>			
Number of Births	990	966	1026
Live births # (%)	986 (99.6)	957	1020
Still births # (rate/1000 births)	<5 (--)*	9(9.3)	6 (0.6)
Neonatal Deaths # (rate/1000 live births)	8 (8.1)	<5(--)*	<5 (--)*
Number of Babies # (%)			
Single	972 (98.2)	944 (98.6)	982 (97.9)
Multiple	18 (1.8)	22 (2.3)	22 (2.2)
Baby Weight in grams # (%)			
2500+	949 (96.2)	911 (95.2)	969 (95.0)
1500-2499	25 (2.5)	40 (4.2)	45 (4.5)
<1500	12 (1.2)	6 (0.6)	6 (0.6)
Low Birth Weight total # (%)	37 (3.8)	46 (4.8)	51 (5.0)
Low Birth Weight singletons # (%)		38 (4.1)	30 (3.1)
Weeks of gestation # (%)			
<32	14 (1.4)	14 (1.5)	19 (1.9)
33-36	36 (3.7)	52 (5.4)	54 (5.3)
37+	936 (94.9)	891 (93.1)	951 (93.2)
Preterm < 37 weeks # (%)	50 (5.0)	66 (6.9)	73 (7.2)

\*cells with less than 5 events are suppressed

### Number of Births

The number of live births is declining in Renfrew County and District. As reported in earlier health status reports (4, 5), live births numbered 1213 in 1991 and 1208 in 1995. The average number of live births per year for the three-year period 1999-2001 is 994, down about 18% from 1995 and 1991.

### Birth Weight

Low birth weight can result in mental and physical disabilities and in extreme cases, death. A variety of factors can help in the prevention of low birth weight ; these include non-smoking, good nutrition, regular physical activity, and stress reduction.

As reported previously, the low birth weight rates for babies born in Renfrew County and District in 1991 and 1995 were 5.6% and 5.0% respectively(4,5). As shown in Table 1 above, the low birth weight rate has declined; the low birth weight rate in Renfrew County and District for the three-year period 1999 – 2001 was 4.5.

### Preterm Births

Preterm birth is a serious perinatal health issue. Preterm babies face higher risks of death, serious health problems and long-term disability. Some of the risk factors for preterm birth include previous preterm birth, previous abortion, smoking, alcohol consumption before the third trimester and low pregnancy weight gain.

The previously reported preterm birth rates for Renfrew County and District were 5.6% in 1991 and 2.6% in 1995 (4,5). As shown in Table 1 above, the preterm birth rates for Renfrew County and District from 1999 – 2000, were 5.0%, 6.9% and 7.2% or 6.4% for the three years combined. These rates are similar to regional and provincial rates.

**Table 2: Perinatal Data on Mothers, Renfrew County and District Health Unit, 1999 - 2001**

	Year		
	1999	2000	2001
<b>Maternal Characteristics</b>			
Age # (%)			
<20	54 (5.5)	57 (6.0)	52 (5.2)
20 - 24	208 (21.2)	221 (23.1)	181 (18)
25 - 29	370 (37.7)	322 (33.7)	346 (34.5)
30 - 34	244 (24.9)	236 (24.7)	274 (27.3)
35 - 39	85 (8.7)	119 (12.5)	128 (12.8)
40+	20 (2.0)		22 (2.2)
Smoked after 20 weeks # (%)	195 (19.9)	187 (19.6)	204 (20.2)
Intend to Breastfeed	768 (78.3)	751 (78.6)	765 (76.3)

### Age of Mother

In keeping with provincial trends and a trend observed earlier in Renfrew County and District the proportion of births to women in their 20's is decreasing while the proportion to women in their 30's is increasing. This continuing trend can be observed in the data on maternal age in Table 2 above.

## Births to Teens

The number of births to teens declined considerably as compared with numbers cited in previous reports. The numbers of births to teens in Renfrew County and District were 75 and 88 for the years 1991 and 1995 representing 6.2 and 7.3 % respectively of total births (4,5). As seen in Table 2 above, the numbers of births to teens were 54, 57 and 52 for the years 1999, 2000, and 2001, representing 5.5, 6.0 and 5.2 per cent of total births.

## Maternal Smoking Status

The Perinatal Database provides data on maternal smoking status, an important public health issue. Exposure to tobacco smoke during the prenatal period is a leading cause of mortality and morbidity, including behaviour problems in children. Smoking after the 20<sup>th</sup> week of pregnancy is associated with low birthweight, preterm birth, stillbirth and maternal bleeding. As seen in Table 2 above, the proportion of mothers in Renfrew County and District who smoked after twenty weeks of pregnancy was about 20 per cent or one in every five mothers. Unfortunately, rates of smoking are even higher in younger mothers. As shown in Table 3 below, the smoking rate (after 20 weeks of pregnancy) among teen mothers was 61% in 1999, about 30% in 2000, and 42% in 2001. In the 20 – 24 year old age group, the proportions smoking after 20 weeks were 28%, 36% and 37 % for the same years. These smoking rates are clearly problematic, and need to be addressed by local health professionals who have contact with young pregnant women.

**Table 3: Smoking and Breastfeeding in Young Mothers, Renfrew County and District Health Unit, 1999-2000.**

	Year		
	1999	2000	2001
<b>Young Mothers</b>			
< 20 years #	54	57	52
Smoked after 20 weeks # (%)	33 (61)	17 (29.8)	22 (42.3)
Intend to Breastfeed # (%)	35 (64.8)	36 ( 63.2)	36 (69.2)
20 – 24 years #	208	221	183
Smoked after 20 weeks # (%)	59 (28.4)	80 (36.2)	69 (37.4)
Intend to Breastfeed # (%)	146 (70.2)	164 (74)	128 (70.8)

## **Breastfeeding**

Breastfeeding is the perfect source of nutrition for babies, reducing the risk of infection, allergies and asthma. Public health goals and objectives include targets for increasing rates of breastfeeding initiation and duration. The breastfeeding variable in the Perinatal Database captures mothers' "intention to breastfeed". Actual breastfeeding is not recorded.

As shown in Table 2, on page the proportion of mothers who intended to breastfeed was 78% in 1999, 79% in 2000 and 76% in 2001. Proportions of young mothers intending to breastfeed are unfortunately not as high. As shown in Table 3 above, the proportions of teen moms intending to breastfeed were 65%, 63% and 69% for the years 1999, 2000, and 2001 respectively. Among mothers aged 20 – 24 years, the proportions were 70%, 74% and 71% for the same years.

## **Summary**

- ◆ The average number of births each year for the three year period 1999 – 2001 was 944, down about 18 % from numbers reported earlier for 1991 and 1995.
- ◆ The low birth weight rate declined to 4.5 from 5.0 and 5.2 in 1995 and 1991.
- ◆ The preterm birth rate appears to have increased from 5.6% in 1991 to 6.4 % for the three-year period 1999-2001.
- ◆ The average age of mothers giving birth in Renfrew County and District continued to increase in keeping with trends in the region and province as a whole.
- ◆ The proportion of births to teens has decreased from levels reported previously. On average between 1999-2001 there were 54 babies born to teen mothers in Renfrew County and District. This represents about 5.5% of all births down from rates of 6.2% and 7.3 % previously reported for 1991 and 1995.
- ◆ The proportion of mothers from Renfrew County and District who smoked after 20 weeks of pregnancy was about 20% or one in five. The proportion of young mothers from Renfrew County and District who smoked after 20 weeks of pregnancy was considerably higher. Among teens the rate was closer to one in two, while in mothers aged 20 – 24 years, the rate was close to one in three. These rates of smoking are clearly problematic and need to be addressed by local health professionals who have contact with young pregnant women.

- ◆ The proportion of mothers in Renfrew County and District who intended to breastfeed was close to 80% or eight out of 10. The proportion of young mothers intending to breastfeed was lower, at about 65% for teens and 72% for mothers aged 20 – 24.

## **References**

- (1) Health Information Partnership Eastern Ontario Region. A Population-based Analysis of Perinatal Data for Eastern Ontario, 1999, February 2001.
- (2) Perinatal Partnership Program of Eastern and Southeastern Ontario. Annual Perinatal Statistical Report 2000, June 2001.
- (3) Perinatal Database, Perinatal Partnership Program of Eastern and Southeastern Ontario.
- (4) Renfrew County and District Health Unit. Community Health Status Report, Issue #1: August 1993.
- (5) Renfrew County and District Health Unit. Community Health Status Report, Issue # 6: February 1999.