

OECD Health Statistics 2025

Definitions, Sources and Methods

Low birthweight

Number of live births weighing less than 2500 grams as a percentage of the total number of live births.

Sources and Methods

Australia

Source: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare.

From 1991 onwards: *Australia's mothers and babies* reports available to download at <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports-statistics/population-groups/mothers-babies/reports>. Latest data available at <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/mothers-babies/australias-mothers-babies/data>, viewed 11 February 2025.

- From 2013 onwards, the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare has produced the data.

- From 1991 to 2012, the National Perinatal Epidemiology and Statistics Unit produced the data on behalf of the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare.

Before 1991: State and Territory maternal and perinatal collections.

✂ **Break in time series in 1991:** Before 1991, data refer to selected states and territories only and have total births (live births + stillbirths) as a denominator.

Further information: <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports-statistics/population-groups/mothers-babies/overview>.

Austria

Source: Statistics Austria, Gesundheitsstatistisches Jahrbuch (Health Statistics Report), Lebendgeborene nach Geburtsgewicht (Live births by birth weight) (several issues).

Further information: <https://www.statistik.at/en/>
(http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database?node_code=hlth_silc_10).

Belgium

Source: Federal Public Service Economic Affairs - Directorate General for statistical and economic information (former National Statistical Institute).

Methodology: Since 2010, the official numbers for livebirths and deaths are coming from the Population National Register (and not exclusively from vital registration). Livebirths and deaths of residents taking place in foreign countries are therefore included in the statistics.

Canada

Source: Statistics Canada. Canadian Vital Statistics Birth Database.

From 2018 onwards: Table 13-10-0422-01 (formerly CANSIM 102-4509).

1979-2017: Table 13-10-0404-01 (formerly CANSIM 102-4005).

1961-1978: Births, 1991, Cat. No. 84-210.

Methodology: The data for 1961-1978 reflect live births weighing 2500 grams and less, whereas after 1978 the data are for live births weighing less than 2500 grams.

Further information: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/>.

Chile

Source: Ministry of Health (MINSAL), Department of Health Statistics and Information (“Departamento de Estadísticas e Información en Salud”, DEIS). Administrative registries of vital facts through the **National Committee of Vital Statistics**, composed of the National Institute of Statistics, (INE), the Ministry of Health (MINSAL, Department of Health Statistics and Information DEIS) and the National Service of Civil Identification Registry (“Servicio de Registro Civil e Identificación”, SRCeI).
Further information: More information available at <https://deis.minsal.cl/>.

Colombia

Source: National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE). **Vital Statistics, Births and deaths.**
Source of the Administrative Record: Sole Registry of Affiliates (Registro único de Afiliados, RUAF).
Further information:
- <https://www.dane.gov.co/index.php/estadisticas-por-tema/salud/nacimientos-y-defunciones/nacimientos>.
- Anonymised microdata: http://microdatos.dane.gov.co/index.php/catalog/MICRODATOS/about_collection/22/5.
Further information: <https://data.unicef.org/topic/nutrition/low-birthweight/>.

Costa Rica

Source: Ministry of Health, data compiled by the **Directorate of Health Services.**
Coverage: Cases reported on a given year. All public and private hospitals that attend women in labor.
Methodology: Births under 2500 grs.
Further information: www.ministeriodesalud.go.cr.

Czechia

Source: Czech Statistical Office. Demographic Yearbook of Czechia.
Coverage: Live births with unknown birthweight have been excluded from the calculation.
Further information: <http://www.czso.cz/eng/redakce.nsf/i/home>.

Denmark

Source: The Medical Birth Register, The Danish Health Data Authority.
Methodology: Low birthweight in percentage of total live births with known birthweight.
Coverage:
- For cases where an induced abortion has been made up to 30 days before birth, and the baby is stillborn and the birth weight <1000g after gestational week 22+0, or a live birth with a baby that dies within the first day and the birth weight < 1000g, those cases are since September 2022 registered as late abortions and excluded from data from 1997 onwards.
- Proportion calculated among those where weight is indicated.
🔪🔪 **Breaks in time series in 1997 and 2019** due to a change in source.
- Data before 1997 include stillbirths while data from 1997 onwards only include live births.
- Children with a birth weight equal to or less than 200g are excluded until 2019.
Further information: <https://sundhedsdatastyrelsen.dk/da/registre-og-services/om-de-nationale-sundhedsregistre/graviditet-foedsler-og-boern/foedselsregisteret>.

Estonia

Source: National Institute for Health Development, Estonian Medical Birth Registry.
Further information: https://statistika.tai.ee/pxweb/en/Andmebaas/Andmebaas_01Rahvastik_02Sunnid/SR30.px/.

Finland

Sources:

From 1987 onwards: **Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare (THL), Medical Birth Register.**
1960-1986: **National Board of Health.**
Further information: http://www.thl.fi/en_US/web/en.

France

Source: **Ministry of Solidarity and Health**, Research, Studies, Evaluation and Statistics Directorate (DREES). BESP; National databases from the "programme de médicalisation des systèmes d'information (PMSI)" (since 2012).


Reference period: Calendar year.

Coverage: French data cover residents of Metropolitan France and/or overseas Départements (Guadeloupe, Martinique, French Guyana, Réunion Island and from 2015 Mayotte), who were hospitalised in public and private hospitals of the same area. They refer to hospitalisations in the units delivering acute care in medicine, medical specialties, surgery, surgical specialties, gynecology and obstetrics (MCO).

Further information: http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database?node_code=hlth_silc_10, État de santé et morbidité / Indicateurs de santé périnatale / Indicateurs issus du PMSI / Poids de naissance.

- *L'état de santé de la population en France*, Drees Rapport 2017 page 178,

<https://drees.solidarites-sante.gouv.fr/sites/default/files/2021-01/Rapport-ESPF-2017.pdf>.

 **Break in time series in 2012:** Before 2012, the source of data came from a health certificate delivered by the doctor after medical examination of the baby within 8 days after birth. The certificates were sent to departmental services of the Infantile and Maternal Protection programme (*Protection maternelle et infantile*, PMI) by the doctor who issued them, and were then sent to the DREES for statistical analysis of key medical indicators (weight, height, gestational age, cesarean section, conditions, immunisation coverage, etc.). However, using this source led to undercoverage of the issue.

Germany

Source: **Federal Statistical Office**, Statistics on the natural movement of the population.

Coverage: The statistics of births are produced from a compulsory complete count. They are based on reports from the registrar in whose district the birth has taken place. Births of mothers who live abroad but gave birth to their child in Germany are not included in the statistics of birth. Live births include all children whose heart has beat, whose umbilical cord has pulsated or whose natural pulmonary respiration has begun after separation from the womb. The other children are considered as still births or miscarriages and are not included in this figure.

 From reporting year 2014 onwards, data on birth weight are no longer available.

- Until 1989, data refer to the Federal Republic of Germany; from 1990 onwards, data refer to Germany after reunification.

Further information: <http://www.destatis.de> (in German) and <http://www.gbe-bund.de>.

Greece

Source: **Hellenic Statistical Authority**. Population Statistics and Labour Market Division, Vital and Migration Statistics Section.

Further information: <https://www.statistics.gr/en/statistics/-/publication/SPO03/>.

Hungary

Source: **Hungarian Central Statistical Office (KSH)**, Demographic Yearbook.

Further information: <http://www.ksh.hu/?lang=en>.

Iceland

Source: **Landspítali-University Hospital and Statistics Iceland**, Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, The Icelandic Birth Registry.

Further information: <http://www.statice.is/>.

Ireland

Sources:

From 1995: Central Statistics Office.

1984-1993: Department of Health and Children Perinatal statistics.

Methodology:

- Data are calculated as the percentage of live births weighing less than 2,500 grams, excluding those with birthweight not stated.

- Data are by year of registration.

Further information: <http://www.cso.ie/en/statistics/birthsdeathsandmarriages/>.

Israel

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics. Based on birth registration and corrections to birthweight based on very low birthweight register and the national program for neonatal screening.

Further information: <https://www.cbs.gov.il/EN/Pages/search/yearly.aspx>.

Note: The statistical data for Israel are supplied by and under the responsibility of the relevant Israeli authorities. The use of such data by the OECD is without prejudice to the status of the Golan Heights, East Jerusalem and Israeli settlements in the West Bank under the terms of international law.

Italy

Sources:

Since 2002: Ministry of Health - Health Information System, Delivery Certificates Database.

Until 2001: ISTAT, Istituto Nazionale di Statistica (National Institute of Statistics), "Nascite, caratteristiche demografiche e sociali" (Birth, social and demographic characteristics).

Coverage: The Delivery Certificates Database has improved over the years and since 2012 it can be considered complete.

Methodology:

❗ Since 2002, data include births in private hospitals not accredited by National Health Service and home births.

- Until 2001, the percentage of low birth weight refers to statistics provided from hospitals of the National Health System (public and private); figures do not include births in private hospitals outside the NHS and home births (about 10% of the total).

Note: Data provided for the year 2024 must be considered provisional because the acquisition and validation process has not yet been completed; some regions have not completed the transmission of data for the previous months.

Further information: <http://www.salute.gov.it/statistiche> (in Italian).

Japan

Source: Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, Vital Statistics of Japan.

Further information: <https://www.e-stat.go.jp/en/stat-search/files?page=1&toukei=00450011&tstat=000001028897>.

Korea

Source: Statistics Korea, Annual Report on Vital Statistics (based on vital registration).

Further information: <http://kostat.go.kr/eng/>.

Latvia

Sources:

From 2000 onwards: Medical Birth Register, Centre for Disease Prevention and Control.

Methodology: Number of live births born at a gestational age of 22 weeks or more with a birth weight less than 2500 g divided by the total number of live births, expressed as a percentage.

1985-1999: **The World Health Organisation, Regional office for Europe**, European Health for all database (HFA-DB) at <http://data.euro.who.int/hfadbf/>.

Lithuania

Source: **Institute of Hygiene**, data from annual reports of maternal hospitals.

Coverage: Live births in maternal hospitals of Lithuania only, no information on birth weight for foreign-born infants.

✂ **Break in time series in 1991:** Up to 1990, live births were calculated based on a birthweight of 1000 g and 28 weeks of gestation period.

Further information: <https://sveikstat.hi.lt:82/documents/0reports/other/dem12.xlsx>.

Luxembourg

Sources: **Ministry of Health, Health Directorate and Luxembourg Institute of Health.**

From 2009: PERINAT (national medical birth registry).

2007-2008: SUSANA (national medical birth registry).

2001-2006: FIMENA register (birth medical certificate).

Methodology:

Numerator: Number of live births in Luxembourg with birthweight <2500g (of resident mothers only).

Denominator: Number of live births in Luxembourg (of resident mothers only).

- Data for 2001, 2002 2003 and 2007 are underestimated, as the birthweight was not reported for many live births (3.1%, 4.0%, 4.3% and 2.7 %).

- The steady growth during the period 2001-2010 in the percentage of babies under 2500 grams is mainly due to improved recording and monitoring data.

Further information: <http://susana.lu/>.

Mexico

Sources:

2011 onwards: **Ministry of Health**, System of data on live birth certificate (SINAC), multiplied by a factor to correct for underreporting observed in some states.

2008 to 2010: **Ministry of Health**. System of data on live birth certificate (SINAC) 2008, 2009, 2010.

2006: **Ministry of Health. National Institute of Public Health**. National Health and Nutrition Survey 2006.

National Dynamic Demographic Survey 2006. Final results.

2003: **Ministry of Health**. National Reproductive Health Survey 2003.

2000: **Ministry of Health / National Institute of Public Health**. National Health Survey 2000.

1997, 1999, 2002, 2004, 2005 and 2007: **National Institute of Statistics**. National Dynamic Demographic Survey.

1995, 1996, 1998 and 2001: **Ministry of Health**. Bulletin of Statistical Information, 1995-1996, 1998 and 2001.

✂ **Break in time series in 2008:** From 2008, it was decided to use as a source of data on live birth the certificate (SINAC) implemented throughout the country starting September 2007. The implementation involves using the same format (certificate) of live births in all states, in both public and private institutions in the country. The certificate includes information about mother, newborn, birth and certifier.

Further information: Salomon, L.J., Bernard, J. P. and Ville, Y. (2007). Estimation of fetal weight: reference range at 20-36 weeks gestation and comparison with actual birth-weight reference range. *Ultrasound Obstet Gynecol*, 29: 550-555. www.interscience.wiley.com and Flores Huerta, Samuel y

Martínez Salgado, Homero. (2012). "Peso al nacer de los niños y niñas derechohabientes del Instituto Mexicano del Seguro Social", *Bol. Med. Hosp. Infant. Mex.*, 69: 30-39.

http://portal.salud.gob.mx/index_eng.html, <http://www.insp.mx/english.html> and <http://www.inegi.gob.mx/> (in Spanish).

Netherlands

Source: Dutch Perinatal Registry (Perined).

Methodology:

Data refer to live births after a gestation period of 22 weeks.

- Data are from a nationwide registry of general practitioners, midwives, obstetricians and pediatricians/neonatologists and include almost 100% of all births.

- Please note that information on births in the perinatal registry is incomplete in 2021. This is caused by delivery problems from the Obstetric Information Systems and the suspension of registration by general pediatricians. No information is available after 2021 due to incomplete registration in the perinatal registry.

Further information: www.perined.nl. Data available via www.peristat.nl.

New Zealand

Source: Ministry of Health (National Collections).

Methodology: Birth data from are based on live births registered in New Zealand by the date of registration. Late birth registrations are included in the population.

Further information: <http://www.health.govt.nz/nz-health-statistics/health-statistics-and-data-sets/maternity-and-newborn-data-and-stats>.

Norway

Source: The Norwegian Institute of Public Health, Medical Birth Registry of (MBRN).

Methodology: The Medical Birth Registry contains information about all births, stillbirths, perinatal deaths and abortions from the 16th week of pregnancy onwards from 1967-2001 and from the 12th week of pregnancy onwards starting in 2002.

Further information: https://statistikk.fhi.no/mfr/92zKyzsWWp9CeDnulgmj_QqXfjvkmj_u.

Poland

Source: Statistics Poland, Demographic Yearbook of Poland.

Methodology: Sources of data on birth are administrative data and the individual documentation "Notification of birth (live and still)" which is also secondarily used by national statistics.

Further information: <http://stat.gov.pl/english/>.

Portugal

Source: Statistics Portugal, Live-birth statistics.

Coverage: National (place of residence of the mother = Portugal). Live births born in Portugal but whose mothers reside outside Portugal are not included.

Further information:

https://www.ine.pt/xportal/xmain?xpid=INE&xpgid=ine_indicadores&indOcorrCod=0012438&contexto=b&d&selTab=tab2.

Slovak Republic

Source: Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic.

Further information: <https://slovak.statistics.sk/wps/portal/ext/themes/demography/population/metadata/>, and also <https://datacube.statistics.sk>.

Slovenia

Source: National Institute of Public Health, Perinatal information system of the Republic of Slovenia.

Further information: (http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database?node_code=hlth_silc_10) <http://www.nijz.si/> (in Slovenian).

Spain

Source: National Statistics Institute Vital Statistics (several issues).

Further information: <https://www.ine.es/jaxiT3/Tabla.htm?t=31940&L=0>.

Sweden

Source: The National Medical Birth Register, **The National Board of Health and Welfare**.

From 1973: Figures are from the Medical Birth Register and are based on copies of medical records for nearly all births in Sweden since January 1, 1973.

1960-1971: Figures are estimates from The Annual Reports from the hospitals in Sweden.

Methodology:

1997 onwards: number of newborns weighing less than 2500 grams as a percentage of total live births over 300 grams.

1973-1996: number of newborns weighing less than 2500 grams as a percentage of hospital deliveries over 1000 grams.

Further information: <https://www.socialstyrelsen.se/en/>.

Switzerland

Source: Federal Statistical Office, Neuchâtel, Vital Statistics.

Further information: <http://www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/portal/en/index/themen/14/02/03/key/04.html>.

Türkiye

Sources:

2012 onwards: **General Directorate of Public Health, Ministry of Health**, National Neonatal Screening Programme.

1998-2008: **Hacettepe University Institute of Population Studies** and **Ministry of Health**, Mother and Child Health and Family. **Planning Department**, The Türkiye Demographic and Health Survey 1998, 2003 and 2008.

Further information: http://www.hips.hacettepe.edu.tr/tnsa2008/data/TDHS_2008_Main_Report.pdf.

United Kingdom

Sources:

From 1978 onwards:

- England and Wales: **Office for National Statistics (ONS)**.

- Scotland: **Information Services Division Scotland**.

- Northern Ireland: **Department for Health, Social Services and Public Safety in Northern Ireland (DHSSPSNI)**.

1960-1977: Table A3.4.1 of "Birth Counts: Statistics of Pregnancy and Childbirth", A. Macfarlane, et al. (Published by TSO, 2000, London).

Coverage:

1982-1987 and 1989 onwards: United Kingdom.

1978-1981 and 1988: Great Britain.

1960-1977: England and Wales.

Methodology:

Scotland:

1998 onwards: Data to calculate low birth weight from Scotland represent those born in hospitals, and differ from numbers published by National Records Scotland (NRS). This shortfall is approximately 2%, with the majority of this being due to incomplete data submission from maternity units and information not being submitted for home births. Births to non-residents are also included. Data are based on the financial year ending 31 March.

Scotland live births exclude home births and births at non-NHS hospitals.

- England and Wales births do not include non-resident births.

Further information: <https://statistics.gov.uk>.

United States

Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services/Centers for Disease control and Prevention/National Center for Health Statistics. National vital statistics reports. Births: Final data (several years).

Coverage: National.

Further information: NCHS Vital Statistics website at <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss.htm>, or the FASTAT section at <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/birthwt.htm>.

NON-OECD ECONOMIES

Argentina

Source: UNICEF/WHO Low birthweight database, July 2023. Data extracted June 2025.

Methodology: Country level modeled estimates, Prevalence of low birthweight.

Further information: <https://data.unicef.org/topic/nutrition/low-birthweight/>.

Brazil

Source: UNICEF/WHO Low birthweight database, July 2023. Data extracted June 2025.

Methodology: Country level modeled estimates, Prevalence of low birthweight.

Further information: <https://data.unicef.org/topic/nutrition/low-birthweight/>.

Bulgaria

Source: National Statistical Institute.

Methodology: Number of live births weighing less than 2500 grams as a percentage of total number of live births.

China

Source: UNICEF/WHO Low birthweight database, July 2023. Data extracted June 2025.

Methodology: Country level modeled estimates, Prevalence of low birthweight.

Further information: <https://data.unicef.org/topic/nutrition/low-birthweight/>.

Croatia

Source: Croatian Institute of Public Health, Medical Birth Database.

Coverage: National.

Methodology: All hospital births are included, regardless of the mother's place of residence.

Further information: <https://www.hzjz.hr/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/HZJZ-HZSLj-2021.pdf>.

India

Source: UNICEF/WHO Low birthweight database, July 2023. Data extracted June 2025.

Methodology: Country level modeled estimates, Prevalence of low birthweight.

Further information: <https://data.unicef.org/topic/nutrition/low-birthweight/>.

Indonesia

Source: UNICEF/WHO Low birthweight database, July 2023. Data extracted June 2025.

Methodology: Country level modeled estimates, Prevalence of low birthweight.

Further information: <https://data.unicef.org/topic/nutrition/low-birthweight/>.

Peru

Source: Ministry of Health [MINSA] and National Registry of Identification and Civil Status [RENEC], 2025. Live Newborn Certificate Online Registration System (CNV).

Coverage: National.

Methodology:

Numerator: Number of live births in Peru registered by the Health Establishment (EESS) in the CNV with birth weight < 2500g within the specified year.

Denominator: Total number of live births in Peru within the specified year.

Inclusions: ICD-10 Codes: P070, P071, P0711 and P0712.

Exclusions: Newborns with unknown weight, newborns of non-resident mothers in Peru, newborns or products with weight < 500 grams.

Further information: <https://www.minsa.gob.pe/cnv/index.asp?op=1> and <https://www.minsa.gob.pe/reunis/?op=1&niv=3&tbl=1>.

Romania

Source: INS Romania - Vital statistics.

Coverage: From 2013 onwards, data refer to live births whose mothers (legal tutor) had their usual residence in Romania. 2012 data refer to permanent residence or usual residence. Up until 2011, data refer to live-births whose mothers (legal tutor) had their permanent residence in Romania.

Further information: <http://statistici.insse.ro:8077/tempo-online/#/pages/tables/insse-table>.

Russian Federation

Source: UNICEF/WHO Low birthweight database, July 2023. Data extracted June 2025.

Methodology: Country level modeled estimates, Prevalence of low birthweight.

Further information: <https://data.unicef.org/topic/nutrition/low-birthweight/>.

Note: This document, as well as any data and any map included herein, are without prejudice to the status of or sovereignty over any territory, to the delimitation of international frontiers and boundaries and to the name of any territory, city or area.

South Africa

Source: UNICEF/WHO Low birthweight database, July 2023. Data extracted June 2025.

Methodology: Country level modeled estimates, Prevalence of low birthweight.

Further information: <https://data.unicef.org/topic/nutrition/low-birthweight/>.

Thailand

Source: UNICEF/WHO Low birthweight database, July 2023. Data extracted June 2025.

Methodology: Country level modeled estimates, Prevalence of low birthweight.

Further information: <https://data.unicef.org/topic/nutrition/low-birthweight/>.

Ukraine

Source: UNICEF/WHO Low birthweight database, July 2023. Data extracted June 2025.

Methodology: Country level modeled estimates, Prevalence of low birthweight.

Further information: <https://data.unicef.org/topic/nutrition/low-birthweight/>.

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<https://www.oecd.org/en/data/datasets/oecd-health-statistics.html>