



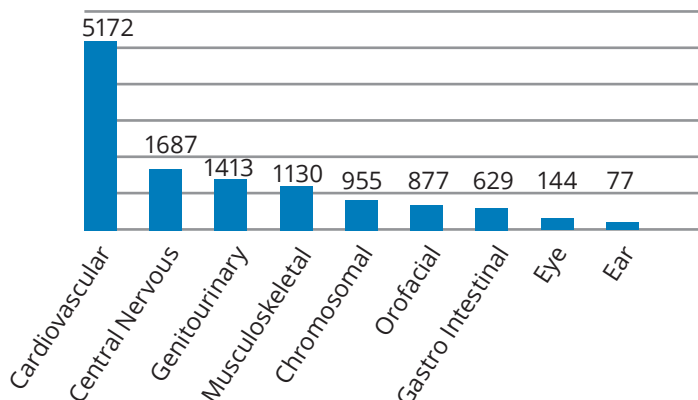
The SC Birth Defects Program

The SC Birth Defects Program (SCBDP) is focused on birth defects prevention, research, and referrals. Birth defects are one of the top causes of infant death and sickness in South Carolina and in the United States. Babies born with a birth defect are more likely to face physical, academic, and social challenges than babies born without a birth defect. Many of these children need Early Intervention (BabyNet) services or surgeries within the first few years of life so that they can thrive.

Prevention of Birth Defects

There are things women can do to help prevent birth defects, including eating healthy food, getting regular exercise, taking 400 micrograms of folic acid, visiting a healthcare provider, getting chronic diseases (such as diabetes and high blood pressure) under control, and avoiding tobacco products including cigarettes, e-cigarettes, and vaping (including Juuls). Preventing and treating infections, getting vaccinations (shots), and avoiding drugs and alcohol can also help. SCBDP partners with Greenwood Genetic Center to support women who are at risk of having a baby born with a neural tube defect. Visit <https://www.ggc.org/birth-defects-prevention-program> to learn more.

Frequency of Birth Defects in South Carolina by Type (2008-2017)



Quick Facts



In 2018, SCBDP identified **169 cases** of Critical Congenital Heart Defects (CCHD) among infants born in South Carolina.

CCHD requires surgery in the first year of life.

Surveillance of Birth Defects

The South Carolina Birth Defects Program (SCBDP) reviews thousands of medical charts each year to identify cases of birth defects.

- SCBDP follows guidelines from the National Birth Defects Prevention Network when looking for birth defects. To learn more, visit www.NBDPN.org.
- From 2008-2017 SCBDP identified 12,084 cases of birth defects.
- For infants born in 2018, SCBDP gathered information on 2,848 possible cases of birth defects
 - » 1,121 were confirmed to be cases of birth defects that are monitored by the program.
- Many children have more than one birth defect. In 2018, SCBDP identified 786 individual children who have at least one birth defect.

Surveillance for Birth Defects Associated with Zika Virus

From 2016 to mid-2019, SCBDP received funding from CDC to look for additional birth defects of the brain which are associated with Zika Virus.

- In 2017 and 2018, SCBDP identified 360 birth defects related to the brain.
- These defects can be caused by many reasons such as genetic syndromes and infections. The women identified by SCBDP who had a baby born with a brain anomaly **did not have Zika virus.**
- This work has provided a better understanding of how many brain-related birth defects occur in state each year.

SCBDP Vision

A South Carolina where healthy births are promoted, every birth defect counts, and families impacted by birth defects are supported.

SCBDP Mission

To collect comprehensive birth defects surveillance data in order 1) to understand the frequency, types, and impact of birth defects in South Carolina, 2) to develop strategies to prevent birth defects, 3) to facilitate birth defects research, and 4) to refer families impacted by birth defects to helpful services.

Referrals to Services for Families Impacted by Birth Defects

The **South Carolina Birth Defects Act** allows SCBDP to refer families to services. In 2019, SCBDP began a pilot project to refer all infants identified with a birth defect who are 2.5 years and younger, to BabyNet.

<https://msp.scdhhs.gov/babynet/>



Future direction:

- In 2019, SC was selected by CDC as one of six areas across the country to conduct enhanced surveillance for congenital heart defects. To do this, SCBDP will partner with the Medical University of SC, Prisma Health, Greenwood Genetic Center, USC School of Medicine, and the SC Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office.
- In 2020, SCBDP will expand case identification to outpatient facilities.
- SCBDP is working to obtain data from border state hospitals and facilities. Many SC residents leave the state for care, so those birth defects cannot be counted by SCBDP.
- Three workgroups are assisting the program in the areas of Prevention, Research, and Referrals.

Questions? Comments?

Please contact:

SCBDP@dhec.sc.gov with questions

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). (2017, December). *Reproductive health: Facts about birth defects*. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/birthdefects/facts.html>

² Murphy SL, Xu JQ, Kochanek KD, Curtin SC, Arias E. Deaths: Final data for 2015. National Vital Statistics Reports; vol 66 no 6. Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics. 2017.

³ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). (2017, December). *Commit to Healthy Choices to Help Prevent Birth Defects*. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/birthdefects/prevention.html>