

## Low-birthweight



Babies born weighing 5 pounds 8 ounces or less or under 2500 grams are considered low birthweight. Babies born weighing under 3 pounds 5 ounces or less than 1500 grams are considered very low birthweight. Babies born weighing under 1000 grams or under 2 pounds 3 ounces are considered extremely low birthweight.

- Babies may be low birthweight or very low birthweight because they are born before they are fully developed (preterm), or because they did not grow normally during pregnancy.
- Approximately two-thirds of low birthweight babies are preterm, and one-third are low birthweight because they did not grow normally during pregnancy (intrauterine growth restricted).
- Low birthweight is one of the leading reasons that babies die or are ill in the first year of life.
- Preterm babies are more likely to suffer life-long complications from developmental, neurological, and learning disabilities, life-long chronic health problems, as well as social and economic disadvantages associated with these biologic impairments.

- Children who are born weighing under 1500 grams or 3lbs 4 ozs are more likely to have decreased scores in verbal comprehension and processing, reading, spelling, and math. These children are more likely to repeat one or more grades in school, and are less likely to graduate from high school.<sup>1,2</sup>
- By age 7, one-half of children born weighing under 1000 grams require special education.<sup>3</sup>

### What does this mean for LA County?

Each year in LA County over 10,000 infant are born weighing 5 ½ pounds or less (low birthweight).

Annually, nearly 1900 children are born very low birthweight and are at increased risk learning and school delays. The children born very low birthweight are more likely to repeat one or more grades in school, and are less likely to graduate from high school.<sup>1,2</sup>

Without further improvement in medical care or prevention strategies it is estimated that each year in LA County approximately 380 children born very low birthweight will have severe sensory or neurologic impairment.<sup>4</sup>

### 2002 Data

[Low Birthweight LA County, CA and US - 2000-2002](#)

Low Birthweight- LA County

[by Race/Ethnicity](#)

[by Payment Source](#)

[by SPA](#)

[by zip code for each SPA](#)



Low birthweight and Infant mortality rate  
by SPA

LAC-DHS, Maternal, Child & Adolescent Programs

Low birthweight by SPA, zipcode, and community:  
The Children's Planning Council

**2001 Data**

For additional data on Low Birthweight and Very Low Birthweight in LA County, and California, please see the following websites:

LAC-DHS, Maternal, Child & Adolescent Programs

Low birthweight and very low birthweight by SPA, zipcode, and community:  
United Way of Greater Los Angeles

Run online queries for birthweight categories, prenatal care onset, ethnicity, and maternal age for LA County data:

Trends in Low Birthweight for LA County and California  
Anne E. Casey Foundation - Kids Count

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Webpage authored by: Janice I. French, CNM, MS, LABBC Center for Healthy Births, and Rose Bemis-Heys, RNP Bemis-Heys Consulting

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