



April 2010

Studies show that almost half the pregnancies in Arkansas are unintended.

Women with the highest percentage of unintended pregnancies were Black, under 20 years of age, unmarried, on Medicaid, and had less than 12 years of education.

Having an unintended pregnancy can mean not finishing high school and living in poverty.

The Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS) is an on-going, population-based surveillance system sponsored by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The PRAMS survey asks women who recently had a live birth about maternal behaviors and experiences that occur before, during, and after pregnancy that might affect their health and the health their babies.

ARKANSAS PRAMS NOTES

Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System

UNINTENDED PREGNANCIES IN ARKANSAS, 2005-2007

Unintended pregnancies are pregnancies which at the time of conception were either *mistimed* (woman felt she wanted to be pregnant later) or *unwanted* (woman did not want to be pregnant then or at any time in the future).

Women who have unintended pregnancies are more likely to practice unhealthy behaviors that can result in poor pregnancy outcomes such as *premature* (less than 37 weeks) and *low birthweight* (less than 5 pounds, 8 ounces) infants. These behaviors include *poor eating habits, binge drinking, smoking and using other drugs, and receiving late prenatal care.*

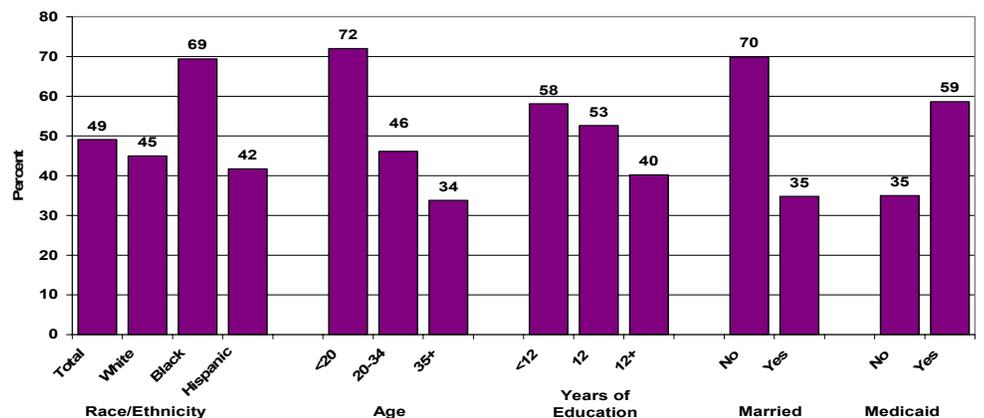
An unintended pregnancy can also affect a child in later years. Children whose births were not intended are more likely to be faced with problems such as child abuse and neglect, incarceration, and increased developmental risks.

For mothers, especially teen mothers, having an unintended pregnancy can mean not finishing high school and a greater chance of living in poverty.

Which Mothers Had Unintended Pregnancies?

- Almost half of the pregnancies in Arkansas were unintended. Black women had the highest percentage of unintended pregnancies, followed by White women, and Hispanic women.
- Women most likely to have an unintended pregnancy were less than 20 years of age, unmarried, had household incomes under \$20,000, were on Medicaid, and had less than 12 years of education.

Figure 1. Selected Characteristics of Women Who Had an Unintended Pregnancy: Arkansas, 2005-2007



"I didn't want to be pregnant but it just happen and now I got to do what a mother has to do." ---PRAMS mother

REASONS MOTHERS GAVE US FOR NOT USING ANY TYPE OF BIRTH CONTROL:

“I had no way to the health center.”

“Waiting to get Medicaid to get on birth control.”

“I did not think about it, nor did I say anything to him.”

“I had problems w/the shots, pills, patches.”

“I don’t believe in birth control.”

“I forgot to take my Depro.”

WHAT CAN BE DONE TO PREVENT UNINTENDED PREGNANCIES?

Improve women’s access to family planning services.

Increase women’s knowledge of reproductive health and contraception.

Encourage women to use contraception.

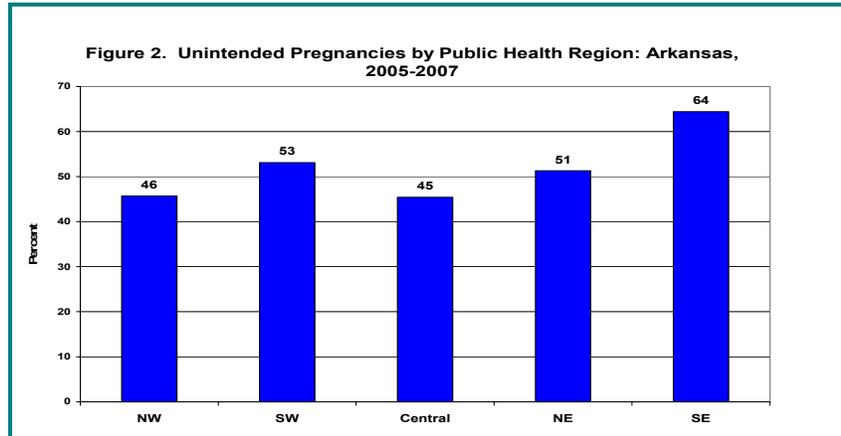
Develop and support teen pregnancy prevention programs.

For more information on unintended pregnancies:

www.cdc.gov/reproductivehealth/UnintendedPregnancy/index.htm

Region

The **Southeast Public Health Region** had the highest percentage of unintended pregnancies.



Unintended Pregnancies and Use of Birth Control Methods

Women in the survey were asked if they were trying to get pregnant before they got pregnant with their new baby. If the response was “no,” they were also asked if they or their husband/partner were doing anything to keep from getting pregnant.

- Overall, about 6 out of 10 women said they were not trying to get pregnant.
- Of those women not trying to get pregnant, only 4 out of 10 were using any type of birth control.

Reasons women gave for not doing anything to keep from getting pregnant

Women in the survey were given a list of reasons why people do not use birth control and were asked to check all that applied to them. The three most frequent responses were 1) *I didn’t mind getting pregnant* (36%), 2) *I thought I could not get pregnant at that time* (24%), and 3) *My husband or partner didn’t want to use anything* (21%). The order and percentages for these responses varied by race and ethnicity.

