DOH: Lower Births and Deaths in Washington

Local News

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Olympia, WA- We live a little longer in Washington, fewer women are getting pregnant, and more of our pregnant mothers are getting early prenatal care. That’s according to the latest numbers added to the Center for Health Statistics website.**Pregnancies, births and abortions**The number of pregnancies, births, and abortions continues to drop. There were 108,045 pregnancies in Washington in 2010, a 4-percent drop from 2009. The greatest decrease was among teens, ages 15-19, falling 12 percent from 2009 to 9,348 in 2010. The total number of births dropped 3 percent with 86,480 born in 2010. The number of abortions in 2010 went down 7 percent from the prior year to 21,066. There were 499 fetal deaths in 2010, about the same as 2009.We have consistently seen births declining for the past few years now, coinciding with the downturn in the economy. Washington’s trend mirrors what we’re seeing nationwide with decreasing pregnancies and births. The good news is that more women in Washington are getting the prenatal care they and their babies need. - State Health Officer Dr. Maxine Hayes

In 2010, only 4.8 percent had late or no prenatal care, down from 5.6 percent in 2009. More women are getting prenatal care, and there are fewer low birth weight babies than a decade ago. Newborns weighing less than 5 pounds, 8 ounces (2,500 grams) develop more slowly and are at risk of serious health problems. The rate of babies who were low birth weight has remained at 6.3 percent. The national rate was 8.2 percent. About 1 in 10 babies were born prematurely (before 37 weeks).Fewer pregnant women were smoking in 2010 – 9.2 percent, down from 9.8 percent in 2009. Gestational diabetes in pregnant women has increased over the past decade from 3.1 percent in 2000 to nearly 6 percent in 2010. This type of diabetes develops during pregnancy (gestation), and can affect both the baby’s and mother’s health.Of the 86,480 births, 2,856 were multiple births (including twins and triplets). More than half (60 percent) of new moms in 2010 had at least some college education and most (83 percent) were high school graduates. Women 25 to 29 years old had the largest number of births at 30 percent, as did non-Hispanic whites at 64 percent. Along with babies getting a healthy start in life with prenatal care and healthy birth weights, people in Washington live longer than the national average. Baby boys born in 2010 have a life expectancy of 78.2 years, and baby girls have a life expectancy of 82.5 years, a little more than two years longer than the rest of the United States. Many in Washington live well into their 80s and 90s, and a few walk down the wedding aisle in their 90s.**Deaths**Among people who died in 2010, more than a third were older than age 84. There were 47,981 deaths among Washington residents in 2010, down slightly from 48,202 in 2009. Leading the top 10 causes was cancer, which accounted for nearly a quarter of deaths, followed by heart disease which caused 22 percent of deaths. Lung cancer accounted for most cancer deaths (27 percent), followed by colorectal, breast, pancreatic, and prostate cancers. The third leading cause of death was Alzheimer’s disease, followed by chronic lung disease, accidents, stroke, diabetes, suicide, chronic liver disease, flu, and pneumonia. The number of suicides has been rising for a number of years. There were 947 suicides in 2010. **Marriages and divorces**There were 40,170 marriages in 2010, slightly less than the number of marriages in 2009 (40,318). The oldest bride was 103 and the oldest groom was 97. The largest number of couples tied the knot on August 21 with 909 marriages. There were 27,068 divorces in

2010, up from 25,395 in 2009.The Department of Health website (www.doh.wa.gov) is your source for *a healthy dose of information*. Also, find us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter.