



Perinatal statistics - parturients, delivers and newborns 2021

Parturients mean age is still rising - a quarter of those who give birth are over 35 years old

MAIN FINDINGS

- The number of newborns increased for the second year in a row in 2021.
- The average age of parturients was 31.6 years, 30.0 years for those who gave birth for the first time.
- The proportion of parturients who smoked during pregnancy continued to decrease.
- 45.3% of those who gave birth were overweight and 18.4% were obese.
- The proportion of cesarean sections was higher than ever before (19.6%).

In 2021, 49 726 children were born in Finland, which is 6.6 percent more than in 2020. The number of children born decreased continuously from 2011 until it started to rise in 2020.

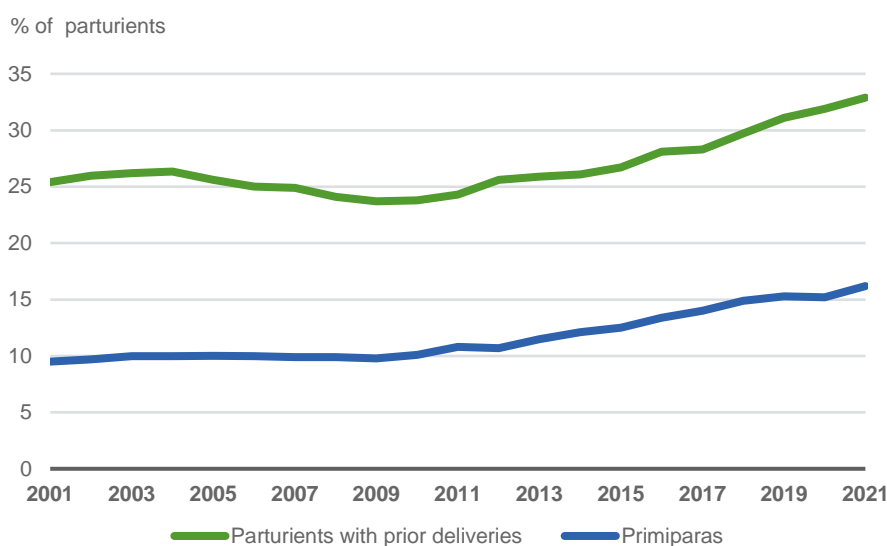
The average age of parturients has increased in recent years. In 2021, the mean age of all those who gave birth was 31.6 years, and the average age of first-time mothers was 30.0 years. Of all those who gave birth, 25.8 percent were over 35 years old. The proportion of parturients under the age of 20 was 1.1 percent.

In 2021, the share of first-time mothers who turned 35 was 16.2 percent, while their share ten years earlier was 10.8 percent.

The proportion of people who smoked during pregnancy has decreased in recent years. In 2021, 7.9 percent of parturients smoked during early pregnancy. 56.4 per-cent of all smokers quit smoking during the first trimester of pregnancy, compared to 39.2 percent ten years earlier.

In 2021, the average pre-pregnancy body mass index (BMI) of women giving birth was over 25 (25.7) for the fourth time. In total 45.3 percent of all parturients were overweight (BMI \geq 25.0) and 18.4 percent were obese (BMI \geq 30).

Figure 1. Primiparas and parturients with prior deliveries, aged 35 and over, 2001–2021, %



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Terms and definitions

Birth: A process resulting in a foetus or a child of at least 22 weeks of gestation ($\geq 22+0$ weeks of gestation) or weighing at least 500 g (≥ 500 g) being born either with vaginal delivery or Caesarean section. Live birth is always a birth. Irrespective of the length of gestation or weight of foetus, induced abortion performed in accordance with the Act on Induced Abortion is not a birth.

Body Mass Index (BMI): a measure that is used to estimate the proportionality of a person's height and weight. $BMI = \text{weight (kg)}/\text{height (m)}^2$.

Caesarean section: Caesarean section is a surgical procedure in which the fetus is born by surgery through the abdominal cavities and cuts in the uterine wall and the umbilical cord is immediately cut off.

Deaths related to childbirth: All deaths that occur one year after birth regardless of the main cause of death. Deaths are divided into maternal deaths (underlying cause of death is related to pregnancy, birth or puerperium ICD-10: O00–O99), other deaths due to disease (ICD-10-classes A–N and P–R), suicides (X60–X84, Y87.0), murders, manslaughters and assaults (X85–Y09, Y87.1) and accidental deaths (V01–X59, Y10–Y89 excluding Y87.0 and Y87.1). Pregnancies that end before gestational week 22 are not included.

Early neonatal mortality: Deaths of children born alive during the first week of life (< 7 days) per 1 000 live births.

Epidural anaesthesia: A method of pain relief during labour, in which in which a local anesthetic is injected into the space between the spinal column and outer membrane of the spinal cord (epidural space).

Episiotomy: Episiotomy is a surgical procedure for the widening of the vagina to facilitate delivery.

Full-term newborn: A newborn or a foetus when the length of gestation at the time of birth is at least 37+0 weeks of gestation but less than 42+0 weeks of gestation (37+0 days \leq length of gestation $< 42+0$ days or 259 days \leq length of gestation < 294 days). Length of gestation at birth between 37+0 and 42+0 weeks.

Gestational diabetes: Gestational diabetes means abnormalities in glucose metabolism diagnosed for the first time during pregnancy.

Glucose tolerance test: After 12-hour fasting a two-hour test to measure fasting blood sugar, which includes drinking 75 g of sugar-containing solution and measuring blood sugar again after one and two hours. Pregnancy diabetes is diagnosed if any of the measurements is abnormal during the two hour test.

Infant mortality: The number of deaths of children under one year of age (child's age: < 1 year or < 365 days, < 366 days in leap year, or 0–364 days from birth, 0–365 days from birth in leap year) per 1 000 live births.

Live birth: Birth of a child that, irrespective of the duration of the pregnancy or weight at birth, breathes or shows any other evidence of life, such as beating of the heart, pulsation of the umbilical cord or movement of the voluntary muscles, whether or not the placenta is attached or the umbilical cord has been cut.

Maternal deaths related to childbirth: Death, in which the underlying cause of death is related to pregnancy, birth or puerperium (ICD-10: O00–O99) and which occur within one year following the birth.

Mean length of stay: The length of hospital stay following delivery is counted from the date of the child's birth.

Perinatal mortality: Stillbirths and deaths during the first week of life (06 days after birth or child's age < 7 days) per 1 000 births (live and stillbirths).

Perinatal period: The perinatal period starts on the 23rd week of gestation (length of gestation $\geq 22+0$ days, when the weight of foetus/newborn is usually around 500 g) and ends on the first week after birth (0–6 days after birth or child's age < 7 days).

Pre-eclampsia (toxemia of pregnancy): A condition during pregnancy in which the blood pressure of the pregnant woman is high and she has proteinuria (in mild pre-eclampsia the level of protein is relatively low). (ICD-10 diagnoses O13 and O14).

Preterm delivery: Length of gestation at birth: less than 37+0 weeks, i.e., not more than 258 days ($< 37+0$ or < 259 days).

Smoking during pregnancy: The data are based on data provided by the parturients themselves concerning smoking.

Spinal anesthesia: A method of pain relief during labour, in which in which a local anesthetic is injected directly into the cerebrospinal fluid that surrounds the spinal cord. A spinal block is a single injection of local anaesthetic and the effect lasts a shorter time period than an epidural block.

Spontaneous vaginal delivery: A vaginal delivery in which the delivery is not assisted with breech extraction, forceps or vacuum extraction.

Stillbirth: Birth of a foetus or a child that shows no evidence of life typical of a live birth, but complying with the definition of a birth ($\geq 22+0$ weeks of gestation or ≥ 500 g).

Total fertility rate: The imputed number of births experienced by one woman during her fertile period, assuming that she does not die during this period and that the age-specific fertility rates for the year in question are valid throughout the reproductive period.

Vacuum extraction: The birth a fetus in vertex position is assisted using a vacuum extraction, which is applied to the head of the fetus and traction is applied to help the second stage of the childbirth.

Very low birth weight: The weight of a newborn or a foetus is less than 1 500 g ($< 1 500$ g).

Symbols used in the tables

.. Data not available or too uncertain for presentation, or subject to secrecy

– Nil observations

www.thl.fi/statistics/perinatalstatistics



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