



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on April 12, 2012

Teen Birth Rate at Lowest Since the '40s, Statistics Show

But pro-life advocate [Kristan Hawkins](#), writing on [LifeNews.com](#), noted that while the latest government figures account for the birth rate, teen pregnancy rates may tell a different story. "Alarming, as the birth rate has fallen in teens ages 15-19 (from 41.5 per 1,000 in 2008 to 34.3 per 1,000 in 2010), the abortion rate has increased (from 17.8 per 1,000 in 2008 to 19 per 1,000 in 2010)," wrote Hawkins.



Additionally, "while the CDC is touting contraception as a major factor in the low birth rate among teens, it cannot be stated enough that 50% of women who are using some form of contraception find themselves unexpectedly pregnant," she observed. "Not only is contraception not an effective means of preventing pregnancy 100% of the time, but the steady teen STD rates from 2008 to 2010 show that one out of 4 teen girls are still contracting STDs."

Hawkins reasoned that if "contraception and contraception sex education was the key to lower birth rates, then one would assume that the rates of both STD and pregnancies occurring during contraception use would decline as well."

According to CDC statistics, nearly every state recorded a drop in teen births between 2007 and 2010, with Arizona posting the largest drop at 29 percent. Some states, like Montana, North Dakota, and West Virginia, recorded little if any decrease. And while Mississippi "leads the nation with 55 teen births per 1,000 girls," noted the [Associated Press](#), its birth rate "has been falling like everywhere else. It dropped 21 percent over three years. New Hampshire has the lowest teen birth rate at just under 16."

AP noted that since 1991, "the overall teen birth rate has dropped by 44 percent. Without that decline, the authors calculated, there would have been 3.4 million more babies born to girls by 2010."

But Hawkins warned that one possible factor in the latest decrease could be the increased use among women, including teens, of the contraceptive oral Plan B — also known as the "abortion pill" because it can induce abortion in women who are pregnant. Because there are no statistics on the number of women using the abortion pill, it is impossible to measure the impact it and other abortifacients are having on the teen birth rate.

"Since Plan B was first allowed to be sold over the counter in the summer of 2006 to women aged 17 on up, the use in the United States has doubled among women ages 15-44," Hawkins noted. "In one UK study, researchers revealed that teen usage of emergency contraception more than doubled after it was made available over the counter. Unfortunately, these statistics are not available here in the U.S."



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Hawkins noted that while various “experts” point to the economy, school-based contraception, abstinence-based sex education, and other factors in the surprising drop in birth rates among teens, a lot more study needs to be done to pin-point the precise reasons for the decrease. “Before advocates on either side of the sex education debate — contraception or abstinence — jump to conclusions, we need to make sure we get all of the facts,” she said. “We are missing some data here.”



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