

US Birth Rate at its Lowest

By [RT](#)

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The birth rate has hit an all time low in the United States, with researchers blaming the poor economy for low fertility rates and women's choices not to have families.

A report by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that in 2011, birth rates only increased among women in the 35-to-39 and 40-to-44 age brackets and declined among younger women. But overall, the birth rate decreased from the year before, reaching the lowest ever reported in US history.

Another surprising statistic: More than 40 percent of all babies were born to unmarried women. Such a large statistic indicates that a large number of US births may not have been planned.

The year 2010 saw 3,953,593 US births, which was down 45,793 from the year before. The fertility rate had also decreased to the lowest ever rate reported, which scientists and researchers believe could be due to the severity of the recession.

Elizabeth Gregory, author of "Ready: Why Women Are Embracing the New Later Motherhood", claims that the poor economy, together with an already-increasing trend of women giving birth later in life, is the cause of the new data.

"The big switch in the timing of when women have children was underway long before the recession of 2007, but the recession intensified it," she wrote in the Huffington Post.

Other researchers have cited the high cost of groceries and child expenses as another reason for less childbirth.

"The cost of raising a child these days is just too expensive for us to consider having a larger family," wrote Joanna Mazewski, a blogger for Babble, a parenting website. "I'm not just talking diapers here: education, extra-curricular activities, insurance, etc., are all factors we considered before ultimately deciding on his surgery."

Mark Mather, a demographer for Population Reference Bureau, told ABC News that aside from women actively choosing not to have children, the recession also affects a woman's physical ability to give birth.

"The economy is definitely having some effect on fertility and we know that from previous decades during the Great Depression we saw a pretty significant drop in fertility and then again in the 1970's," he said. "We weren't too surprised to see a decline in fertility during this most recent economic downturn."

The low US birth rate has not yet reached European levels, but the nation may soon face

some of the same problems. Demographers worry that if the young population plummets, it will become difficult to take care of the elderly that can no longer be a part of the workforce. This would consequentially affect the tax rates, which would likely skyrocket if the elderly population outweighs the young.

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