

Prevalence of Low Birth Weight (<2500g) among WIC-Enrolled Infants, New York State, 2024

Birth weight is an infant health indicator with a strong predictive value for both short- and long-term health outcomes. Low birth weight, defined as a birth weight below 2,500 grams (5 pounds 8.2 ounces), is associated with infant mortality and cardiovascular disease^{1,2}. This report presents state- and county-level low birth weight prevalence rates among infants enrolled in the New York State (NYS) Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) in 2024. Birth weight data come from the NYS Pediatric Nutrition Surveillance System (PedNSS) which tracks prevalence and trends of nutrition-related indicators among WIC-enrolled infants and children under five years of age³. Only infants born within the calendar year 2024 are considered in this analysis.

- In 2024, 10.0% of all NYS WIC-enrolled infants were born at a low birth weight (Figure 1).
- Urbanized upstate counties and the Capital District reported some of the highest rates of low birth weight in 2024, including Schenectady (16.3%), Oneida (15.9%), Columbia (15.5%), Monroe (14.4%), Saratoga (13.6%), Albany (13.4%), and Broome (12.4%) Counties.
- Four counties in the Lower Hudson Valley reported the lowest proportions of low birth weight: Ulster (4%), Putnam (4.7%), Rockland (6.2%), and Orange (6.7%) Counties (Figure 1, Table 1).

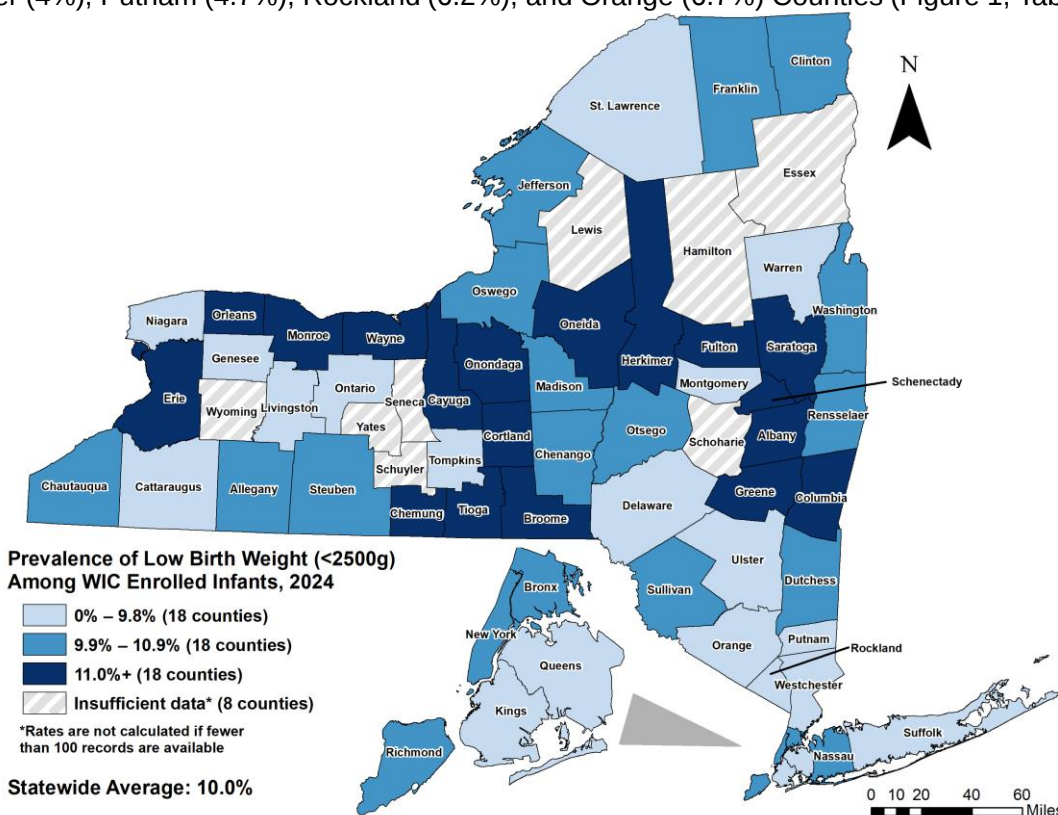


Figure 1. Map of New York State counties, colored by low birth weight prevalence in 2024. Inset: New York City.

Public Health Opportunity

Low birth weight is a known risk factor for infant mortality in the US and NYS. While infant mortality has significantly improved in NYS over the past decade, with New York achieving the sixth lowest rate of infant mortality in the nation in 2023⁴, geographic and racial/ethnic disparities still exist. Local health departments and other community-based public health partners can use county-level low birth weight prevalence rates to identify local underserved areas where additional resources and outreach may improve access to early prenatal care and services aimed at preventing poor nutrition during pregnancy. The NYS 2025-2030 Prevention Agenda Plan⁵ identifies several other interventions that can be used locally to address social determinants of health and prevent the widening of disparities in infant health.

Table 1. Prevalence of Low Birth Weight (<2500g) among WIC-Enrolled Infants by County, NYS, 2024

County	Total Infants Assessed	Low Birth Weight (%)	County	Total Infants Assessed	Low Birth Weight (%)
Albany	1227	13.4	Niagara	690	9.7
Allegany	181	10.5	Oneida	1000	15.9
Bronx	11236	10.8	Onondaga	1834	11.6
Broome	839	12.4	Ontario	294	9.5
Cattaraugus	313	7.3	Orange	1892	6.7
Cayuga	290	11.7	Orleans	121	14.0
Chautauqua	608	10.7	Oswego	441	10.0
Chemung	393	11.7	Otsego	131	10.7
Chenango	198	10.6	Putnam	169	4.7
Clinton	276	10.5	Queens	11318	9.1
Columbia	142	15.5	Rensselaer	533	10.9
Cortland	212	11.8	Richmond	1510	10.7
Delaware	133	6.8	Rockland	3287	6.2
Dutchess	684	10.5	Saratoga	359	13.6
Erie	3536	12.2	Schenectady	539	16.3
Essex	99	**	Schoharie	92	**
Franklin	122	10.7	Schuyler	54	**
Fulton	158	11.4	Seneca	78	**
Genesee	207	9.7	St. Lawrence	417	8.6
Greene	133	12.0	Steuben	363	10.5
Hamilton	10	**	Suffolk	4842	9.3
Herkimer	218	11.9	Sullivan	455	9.9
Jefferson	713	10.0	Tioga	209	11.0
Kings	17568	9.0	Tompkins	223	8.1
Lewis	94	**	Ulster	347	4.0
Livingston	169	7.7	Warren	156	8.3
Madison	215	10.7	Washington	215	10.2
Monroe	2996	14.4	Wayne	268	12.3
Montgomery	252	9.5	Westchester	3259	9.8
Nassau	3320	10.2	Wyoming	74	**
New York	6146	10.4	Yates	45	**

** Rates are not calculated if fewer than 100 records are available.

References

1. Wilcox AJ. On the importance—and the unimportance—of birthweight. *Int J Epidemiol* 2001; **30**:1233-41.
2. Risnes KR, Vatten LJ, Baker JL, et al. Birthweight and mortality in adulthood: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Int J Epidemiol* 2011; **40**:647-61.
3. New York State Department of Health. The NYS Pediatric Nutrition Surveillance System (PedNSS). <https://www.health.ny.gov/statistics/prevention/nutrition/pednss/index.htm>
4. New York State Department of Health. New York State Prevention Agenda, 2025-2030. https://health.ny.gov/prevention/prevention_agenda/2025-2030/
5. Centers for Disease Control. Stats of the States: Infant Mortality. Retrieved September 16, 2025. <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/state-stats/deaths/infant-mortality.html>