

Fewer women are giving birth prematurely

By ACSH Staff — November 14, 2012



The nation's rate of premature births is the lowest in a decade.

Dropping for the fifth straight year, the preterm birth rate in 2011 was 11.7 percent, giving the U.S. a C, according to the [March of Dimes Report Card](#) [1]. The March of Dimes has set a goal of 9.6 percent by 2020.

Despite the reduction in preterm births, there is still significant room for improvement. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, nearly half a million babies in the U.S. are born prematurely prior to 37 weeks of gestation each year. The greatest decrease was for late preterm births (infants born between 34 and 36 weeks of gestation).

This is certainly good news, says ACSH's Dr. Gilbert Ross. Given the publicity of the adverse effects of elective early delivery, something many people for a long time believed was not a problem, it's good to see that more women are opting for full-term pregnancy.

ACSH's Dr. Elizabeth Whelan added, Better prenatal care and reduced smoking rates among women have also contributed to this salutary trend.

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