

# Maternal Health and the Role of Nutrition

Despite having one of the world's most advanced healthcare systems and largest economies, the United States is mired in a maternal health crisis, with one of the highest rates of maternal mortality among developed nations.

## 4M+

More than 4,000,000 women give birth in the U.S. annually.

## 700

More than 700 of them die during pregnancy, while giving birth or post partum.

## 70k

70,000 women have near-fatal complications after giving birth.<sup>1</sup>

## CORE OF THE PROBLEM

Healthcare inequities and racial disparities are at the core of the problem.

Black women are **2.6x** more likely

to die due to a pregnancy-related cause compared to white women.<sup>2</sup> Older women also face greater risk.

U.S. deaths per 100,000 live births<sup>4</sup>  
2018-2020

### RACE/ETHNICITY



### WHEN WOMEN ARE DYING

Risk doesn't end when pregnancy ends. Potentially fatal post-pregnancy complications include blood clots and hemorrhages.<sup>3</sup>



**38%**

While pregnant



**45%**

End of pregnancy to six weeks after



**18%**

Six weeks to one year after



At least 60% of maternal deaths are preventable.<sup>5</sup>

## FACTORS IMPACTING MATERNAL HEALTH

The social, economic, and environmental factors that affect maternal health during the pre- and postnatal period are complex and connected.



### Access to prenatal care

Early, regular prenatal care gives pregnant women the information and support they need to have a healthy pregnancy. It also helps to identify and manage chronic conditions.<sup>6</sup>



### Chronic conditions

Illnesses including diabetes, hypertension, cardiovascular disease, and obesity can mean higher risk of complications in pregnancy and increased rates of mortality.<sup>8</sup>

### Social Determinants of Health (SDOH)<sup>7</sup>

SDOH are non-medical factors that contribute to health disparities and inequities and are known to influence maternal health outcomes. Factors include:

- Food insecurity
- Socio-economic status
- Unemployment
- Transportation access
- Social isolation
- Unsafe neighborhoods



## HEALTH EQUITY ISSUES

There is no question that good nutrition is paramount to improving outcomes for mothers, babies — and even insurers.

### Diet & Nutrition Affect Pregnancy Before, During, and After



Lack of balanced meals can create risks to mother and child.



Poor health can add costs to the healthcare system.



Limited access to nutritious food affects health.



Health influences postpartum breastfeeding for child development.

### OUTCOMES FOR PREGNANT WOMEN

- Supports healthy fetal development
- Improves ability to carry to full term
- Reduces health risks and complications for mother and baby, even after delivery
- Facilitates adherence to dietary guidelines for conditions like diabetes
- Promotes A1c and blood pressure control
- Addresses SDOH

### OUTCOMES FOR HEALTH PLANS

- Supports a holistic approach to maternal and child health
- Lowers the cost of pre- and postnatal care through minimizing high-cost utilization such as emergency transportation, emergency department visits, inpatient stays, observation and neonatal intensive care unit
- Impacts highest risk, hardest-to-engage members
- Drives postnatal Healthcare Effectiveness Data and Information Set measures

Meal delivery services can offer the good nutrition pregnant and postpartum women need with the convenience and time savings they want during a busy and stressful time in their lives.

Mom's Meals® offers programs tailored to women's personal needs, during and after pregnancy. Whether the pregnancy is high risk, or the expectant mother is managing a chronic condition, or is just trying to eat as healthy as possible throughout pregnancy and beyond, we ensure they get the nutrition they need.

Sources:

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/1897/text>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/culture/article/maternal-mortality-usa-health-motherhood?loggedin=true>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.commonwealthfund.org/publications/2019/oct/improving-health-women-better-supporting-them-through-pregnancy-and-beyond>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/hestat/maternal-mortality/2020/e-stat-maternal-mortality-rates-2022.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/culture/article/maternal-mortality-usa-health-motherhood?loggedin=true>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.kff.org/report-section/racial-disparities-in-maternal-and-infant-health-an-overview-issue-brief/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/leading-health-indicators/2020-lhi-topics/Maternal-Infant-and-Child-Health/determinants>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.commonwealthfund.org/publications/issue-brief-report/2020/dec/maternal-mortality-united-states-primer>