

Spina Bifida- Facts and Statistics

October is Spina Bifida Awareness Month. Spina Bifida is a birth defect that affects the spine and the spinal cord. The membranes surrounding the spinal cord do not close properly.

Facts and Statistics

- Each year, about 1,500 babies are born with spina bifida.
- There is no known cause
- Accumulation of fluid in the brain affects 70% of children.
- 40% of shunts fail or become in affected and need to be changed within a year.
- It can happen anywhere along the spine if the neural tube does not close all the way.
- Spina Bifida might cause physical and intellectual disabilities that range from mild to severe depending on the size and location of the opening in the spine.
- Myelomeningocele is the most serious type of spina bifida.
- Spina Bifida can be diagnosed during pregnancy or after the baby is born.
- Some people with Spina Bifida may never experience symptoms
- Spina Bifida occurs between the 3rd and 4th week of pregnancy.
- Children with Spina Bifida may have difficulty with math, reading comprehension and learning.
- Common challenges to learning include, fine and gross motor skills, spatial orientation, communication difficulties and attention and memory.
- Some children with Spina Bifida also have attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).
- Hispanic women have the highest rate of having a child affected by spina bifida, when compared with non-Hispanic white and non-Hispanic black women. Data from 12 state-based birth defects tracking programs from 1997-2007 were used to estimate the total number of pregnancies affected by spina bifida compared to the total number of live births (also called the prevalence of spina bifida) for each racial/ethnic group:
 - Hispanic: 3.80 per 10,000 live births
 - Non-Hispanic black or African American: 2.73 per 10,000 live births
 - Non-Hispanic white: 3.09 per 10,000 live births

Resources

[March of Dimes](#)

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References

[Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)

[Children's Hospital of Philadelphia](#)