



Sudbury & District

Health Unit

Service de  
santé publique

# Teenage Pregnancy Fact Sheet

Results for Sudbury and Districts

During the last quarter century, there has been a significant decrease in the rate of teenage pregnancy in Canada, reflecting increased awareness of the risks associated with unprotected sex and increased availability of contraceptives.<sup>1</sup> The availability and legalization of abortion has also played a significant role in decreasing the number of children born to teenage mothers.<sup>2</sup>

This fact sheet focuses on differences and similarities between residents of the Sudbury & District Health Unit (SDHU) area and the province of Ontario. Four measures were examined: Teenage Sexual Behaviour, Teenage Pregnancy Rates, Live Births to Teenage Mothers, and Teenage Abortion Rates. Information was collected through hospital data, vital statistics, and the 2005–2010 Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS).<sup>3</sup>

## Fast Facts

- ➔ In the SDHU area, 54% of teenagers, 15 to 19 years of age, were sexually active or had sexual intercourse at least once (2005–2010 average).
- ➔ The average teenage pregnancy rate per 1,000 female teenagers was 34 per year in the SDHU area from 2005 to 2009, while the Ontario rate was 28 per year.
- ➔ In the SDHU area, the number of live births to teenage moms was 108 per year, on average, between 2005 and 2009.
- ➔ Between 2005 and 2009, the average SDHU abortion rate, per 1,000 female teenagers, was 18. In Ontario, the teenage abortion rate averaged 17 per year.

## Teenage Sexual Behaviour

In order to provide effective teenage pregnancy prevention programming, an understanding of teenage sexual behaviour is essential.

In the SDHU area, 54% of teenagers, 15 to 19 years of age, have had sexual intercourse at least once. Of the SDHU area teenagers who were sexually active, 41% had their first sexual experience at age 15 or younger and 56% had their first sexual experience at age 16 or 17. In Ontario, teenage sexual activity rates were significantly lower (37%), and a lower proportion of teenagers who were sexually active reported the age of their first sexual encounter before the age of 17 (37% at age 15 or younger; 51% at age 16 or 17).

## Teen Pregnancy Rates

Teenage pregnancy may have health related consequences in the absence of appropriate support systems, health care access and economic means. Pregnant teenagers can be at an increased risk of developing anemia, toxemia, eclampsia, hypertension, pre-term delivery, as well as a prolonged and/or difficult labour.<sup>4 5</sup> Children born to teenage mothers can also be at an increased risk for low birth weight and other associated health consequences.<sup>5</sup>

The pregnancy rate, per 1,000 female teenagers in the SDHU area was 34 per year, on average, between 2005 and 2009. Ontario's teenage pregnancy rate remained at approximately 28 per year in that timeframe.

Although the pregnancy rate for the SDHU area has increased from 2005 to 2009 (Figure 1), it is important to note that these rates have been in decline for a number of years.

The number of reported sexual partners for teenagers aged 15 to 19 who were sexually active was similar in the SDHU area to the province; 66% of SDHU teens had one partner whereas 34% had two or more partners. For Ontario 65% had one partner and 35% had two or more (2005–2010 average).

Of SDHU area teenagers who reported having sexual intercourse with two or more partners in the last year or were having sex with a partner whose last relationship lasted less than one year, 79% reported always using a condom when sexually active. Similarly, in Ontario, 78% of teenagers in the same risk category reported always using a condom.

## Live Births to Teenage Moms

Between 2005 and 2009, the number of live births to teenage mothers averaged 108 per year in the SDHU area. The Ontario average was 4,589 per year. The live birth rate per 1,000 female teenagers was higher in the SDHU area (16) than in Ontario (11).

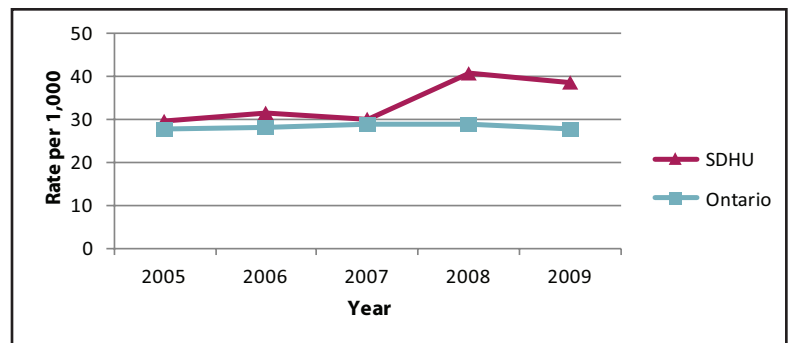
## Teenage Abortion Rates

Since the legalization of abortion in 1988, abortions have become available in all Canadian provinces and territories, with the exception of Prince Edward Island. However, access to abortion services varies throughout Canada.

The average annual abortion rate for the SDHU area, per 1,000 female teenagers 15 to 19 years of age, was 19 compared to Ontario's rate of 17 between 2006 and 2010. While Ontario's rate remained rather stable, the SDHU abortion rate fluctuated between 16 in 2006 and 21 in 2008.

The fluctuations in the SDHU abortion rate are not necessarily indicative of a long-term trend. Overall, the five year average has increased from 15 per 1,000 female teenagers per year between 2001 and 2005 to 19 between 2006 and 2010.

Figure 1. Pregnancy rates for SDHU and Ontario, per 1,000 female teenagers, 15-19 years of age, 2005 to 2009



Source: IntelliHealth, Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. Data retrieved in October 2012.

<sup>1</sup>Health Canada, *Teenage Pregnancy* [document online]; available from <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/82-003-x/2000001/article/5299-eng.pdf>; accessed October 2012.

<sup>2</sup>Public Health Agency of Canada, *Canadian Perinatal Health Report* [document online]; available from <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/publicat/2008/cphr-rspc/pdf/cphr-rspc08-eng.pdf>; accessed October 2012.

<sup>3</sup>Sudbury & District Health Unit. 2005. *Sexual Behaviours and Sexual Health: Results for the Canadian Community Health Survey*. Sudbury: Author.

<sup>4</sup>Community Action Program for Children/Canadian Prenatal Nutrition Program. (2007). *On the move: Mobilizing community and engaging youth to reduce rates of teen pregnancy in Canada*. Ottawa: CAPC/CPNC.W

<sup>5</sup>Chen, X. K., Wen, S. W., Fleming, N., Demissie, K., Rhoads, G. G., & Walker, M. (2007). Teenage pregnancy and adverse birth outcomes: a large population based retrospective cohort study. *International Journal of Epidemiology*, 36(2), 368-373.

## For More Information



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