

# Our Health Counts Toronto

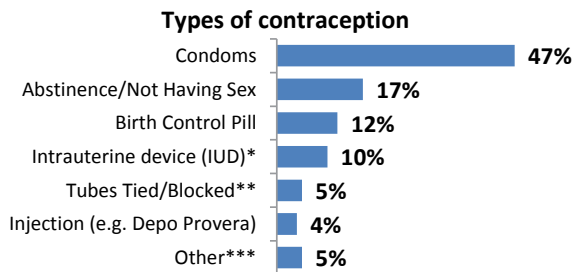
An inclusive community-driven health survey for Indigenous peoples in Toronto

## Reproductive and Sexual Health

Reproductive, maternal, and infant health outcomes are important measures of overall population health. Despite this importance, there are big gaps in population based reproductive, maternal and infant health information for Indigenous peoples in Canada.<sup>1</sup> The intergenerational transmission of health promoting birthing and parenting knowledge and practices are a core part of many Indigenous knowledge systems.<sup>2</sup> This knowledge and practice was negatively impacted by colonial policies such as the Indian act, residential schools, forced sterilization and the outlawing of Indigenous midwifery.<sup>3</sup> Revitalization is a key part of advancing Indigenous infant, maternal, and family health. Community-led health services and the resurgence of Indigenous midwifery across Turtle Island are actively engaged in ensuring that our mothers and babies are once again nurtured and supported.

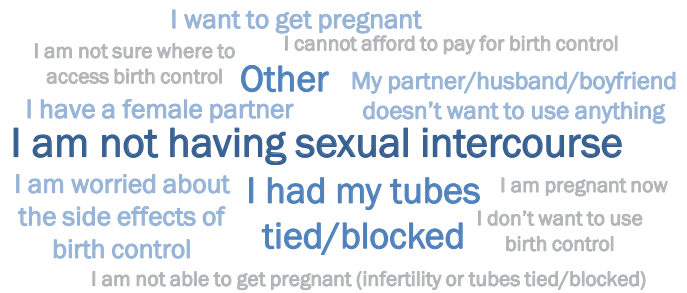
### Contraception

**56%** of Indigenous peoples in Toronto identifying as women, trans, and other, 15 to 44 years, were taking some form of contraception to keep from getting pregnant.



\*IUD includes Mirena, ParaGard;  
 \*\*Tubes tied: female sterilization, Essur, Adiana  
 \*\*\*Other includes contraceptive patch, vasectomy, withdrawal

#### Reasons for not taking birth control were:

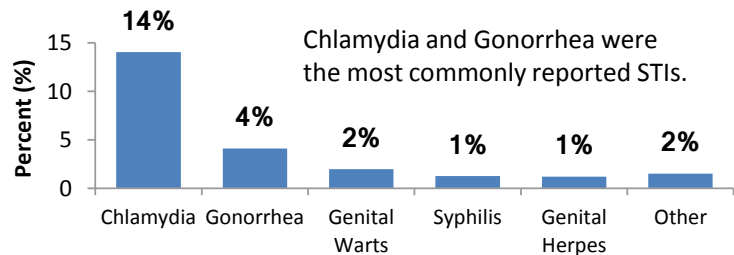


**26%** of Indigenous adults believed fertility services serving Indigenous people are inadequate

### Sexually Transmitted Infections

**21%** of Indigenous adults have been diagnosed or treated for a sexually transmitted infection (STI) in their lifetime.

**28%** of Indigenous adults believe sexual health services are inadequate



### Fertility Rate

The fertility rate for Indigenous people identifying as women, trans, and other of reproductive age (15 to 49 years) living in

Toronto is **2.12 children**.

vs.

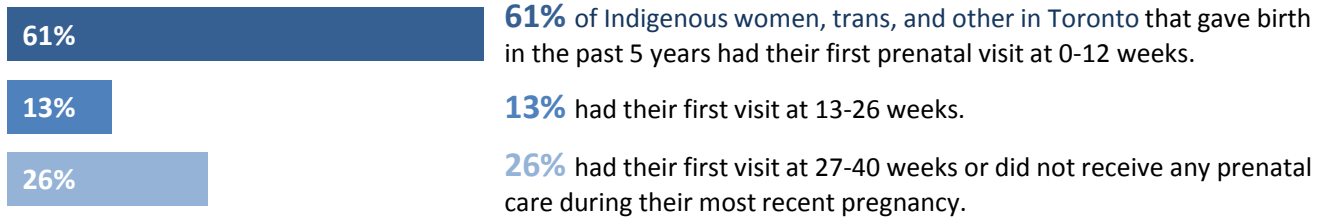
**1.51 children** per woman living in Ontario (Canadian Vital Statistics 2013).<sup>4</sup>

Based on the population estimate of reproductive age, it is expected that approximately **1,036 – 1,408** children will be born to Indigenous women, trans, and other per year in Toronto.

Reproductive and Sexual Health

**Prenatal And Birthing Care**

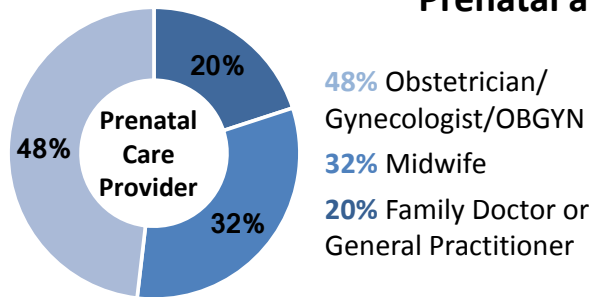
**27%** of Indigenous adults in Toronto believed reproductive health and pregnancy services are inadequate.



In comparison, **94.9%** of women in Canada had their first prenatal care visit at 13 weeks or earlier (MES 2006/2007).<sup>5</sup>

Indigenous mothers (includes women/trans/other) in Toronto who experienced discrimination from a healthcare professional were **2.5 times** more likely to not receive prenatal care or receive prenatal care in the 3<sup>rd</sup> trimester of pregnancy.

**Prenatal and Birthing Care**



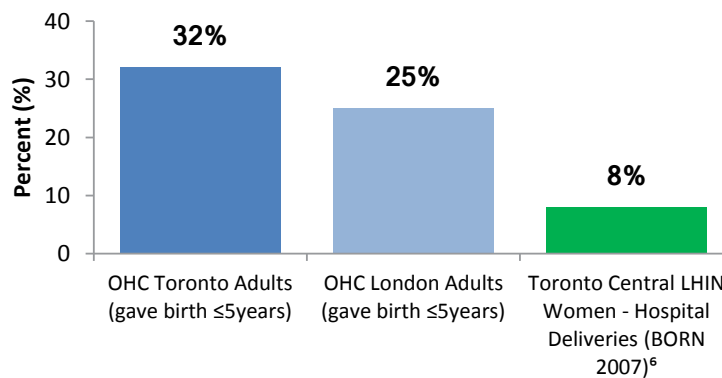
**97%** of Indigenous people identifying as women, trans, and other that gave birth in the past 5 years indicated that the prenatal care provider they used was their preferred choice.

**32%** of Indigenous adults in Toronto believed services for Indigenous mothers are inadequate.

**1 in 5 (20%)** indicated not receiving prenatal care as early as they wanted.

**Midwifery Care**

A higher rate of Indigenous people that gave birth in the past 5 years used a midwife as their prenatal care provider compared to women in the Toronto Central LHIN.



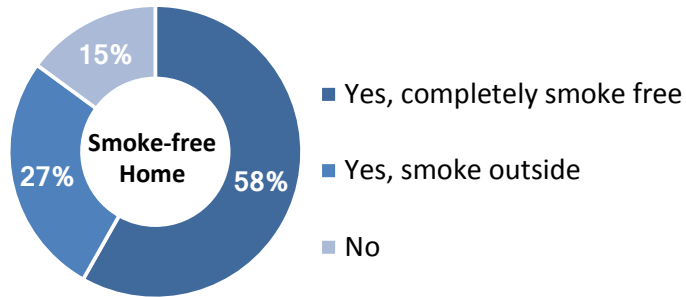
**All** women/trans/other that had a midwife as their prenatal care provider said it was their preferred prenatal care provider.

## Reproductive and Sexual Health

### Womb As First Environment

**13%** of Indigenous children's mothers (includes women, trans, and other) in Toronto experienced Gestational Diabetes during their pregnancy.

In comparison, **7%** of mothers that gave birth in Ontario experienced Gestational Diabetes.<sup>7</sup>



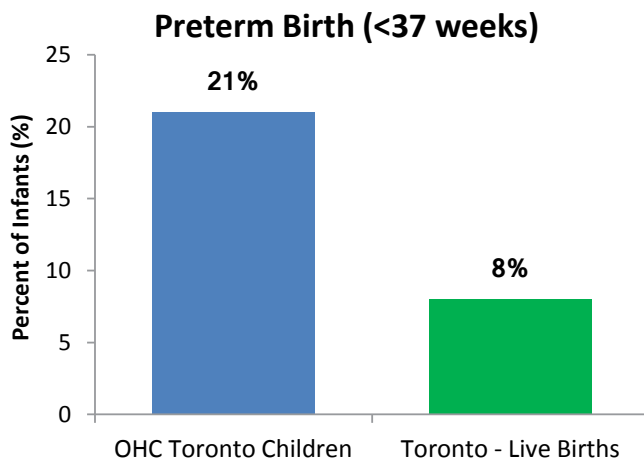
**85%** of Indigenous mothers (includes women, trans, and other) had a smoke-free home during their pregnancy.

### Birth Story

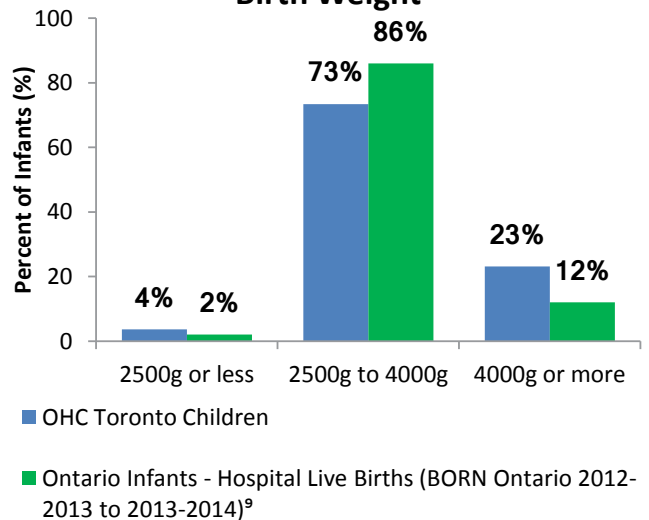
**21%** (1 in 5) of Indigenous infants in Toronto were born premature (born before 37 weeks).

VS.

**8%** of infants in Toronto.<sup>8</sup>



### Birth Weight

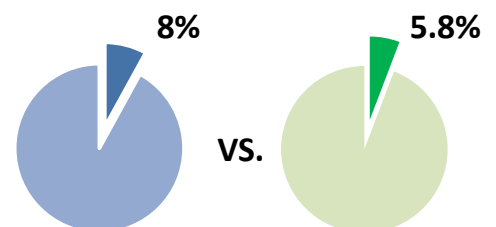


Indigenous infants born in Toronto were 2X more likely to be overweight or underweight compared to infants born in Ontario.\*

\* Note these differences indicate a trend only

### Teenage Pregnancy

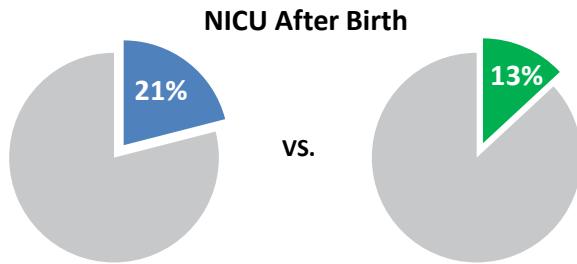
A higher percentage of Indigenous women, trans, and other in Toronto who gave birth in the past 5 years were teenagers (15-19 years) compared to the general population of women who gave birth in Toronto (Ontario Inpatient Discharges and Hospital and Medical Services Data, 2004-2013 – MOHLTC).<sup>10</sup>



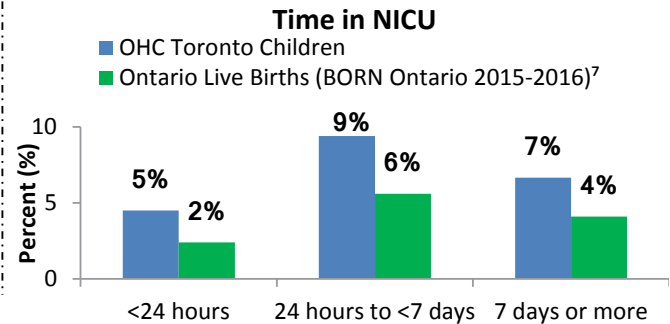
## Reproductive and Sexual Health

### Neonatal Intensive Care Unit

**Over 1 in 5** (21%) Indigenous children in Toronto were admitted to the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) immediately after birth. This is higher than the **13% of live births in Ontario** admitted to the NICU.<sup>7</sup>



**7% of Indigenous children** were in the NICU for 7 days or more. In comparison, **4% of live births in Ontario** newborns were in the NICU for 7 days or more.<sup>7</sup>



### Breastfeeding/Chest Feeding

Chest feeding is increasingly being used to refer to breastfeeding. It is a more inclusive word that provides another term for breastfeeding for people that do not identify as women.

**76%** of Indigenous women, trans, and other that gave birth in the past 5 years breastfed their most recent child.

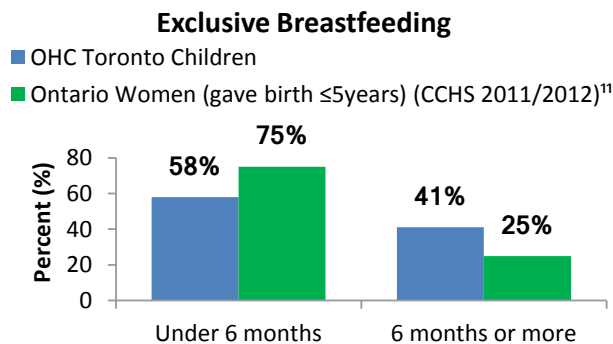
This is slightly lower than the **89%** of women in Canada.<sup>11</sup>

**61%** of Indigenous children in Toronto were breastfed.

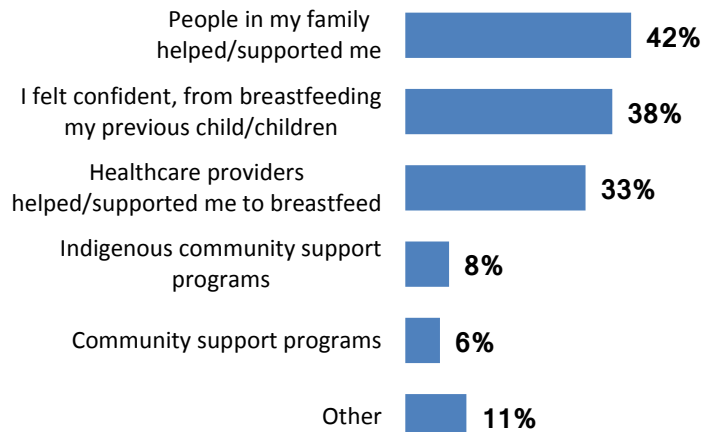
The main reasons Indigenous mothers (includes women/trans/other) in Toronto did not breastfeed:

- Bottle feeding easier
- Medical condition of mother
- Medical condition of infant

**41%** of birth parents (mother/other) of Indigenous children in Toronto breastfed their most recent child exclusively for 6 months or more compared to **25%** of mothers in Ontario.<sup>11</sup>



#### Factors that helped birth parents of Indigenous children breastfeed:







# Our Health Counts Toronto

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## Reproductive and Sexual Health Reference

### Survey Question

RDS Prevalence Estimate  
(95% Confidence Interval)

#### Did you receive prenatal care as early as you wanted?

Yes	80.4% (67.6, 93.1)
No	19.7% (6.9, 32.4)

#### Did you experience diabetes during your pregnancy (i.e. Gestational diabetes, pre-existing Type II Diabetes)?

Yes	13.2% (5.7, 20.6)
No	86.8% (79.4, 94.3)

#### During your pregnancy with your child, did you live in a smoke-free home?

Yes, completely smoke free	58.2% (45.8, 70.6)*
Yes, smoke outside	26.9% (15.6, 38.1)*
No	14.9% (6.5, 23.4)

#### Do you know how many weeks you (or partner/spouse/child's birth mother) were/was into the pregnancy when you child was born?

Born before 37 weeks	21.0% (9.4, 32.7)
Born 37 weeks or later	79.0% (67.4, 90.6)

#### Immediately after birth, was your child admitted to an intensive care unit?

Yes	20.8% (11.0, 30.6)
No	79.2% (69.5, 89.0)

#### How long was your child in the intensive care of special care unit?

Less than 24 hours	21.8% (0.0, 51.5)
1 day to less than 7 days	45.7% (18.3, 73.1)
7 days or more	32.5% (9.6, 55.3)*

#### How much did your child weigh at birth in grams?

2500g or less	3.6% (0.0, 7.2)
2500g to 4000g	73.4% (63.6, 83.1)
4000g or more	23.1% (13.8, 32.4)

#### How old were you when your child was born?

15-19 years	7.5% (0.6, 14.5)
20 years or older	92.5% (85.5, 99.4)

#### For your last baby, did you breastfeed or try to breastfeed your baby, even if only for a short time? (asked to Indigenous women/trans/other 15-44 years)

Yes	75.8% (60.3, 91.4)
No	24.2% (8.6, 39.8)

#### Did you breastfeed or try to breastfeed your child even if only for a short time? (asked to birth parent of Indigenous children)

Yes	60.5% (47.1, 73.8)
No	39.5% (26.2, 52.9)

#### How old was your child when you stopped breastfeeding?

Less than 6 months	55.9% (41.5, 70.3)
6 months or older	44.1% (29.7, 58.5)

#### What helped or made it possible for you to be able to breastfeed your child?

People in my family helped and supported me to breastfeed	41.9% (28.0, 55.8)
Healthcare providers helped and supported me to breastfeed	33.5% (22.2, 44.8)

I felt confident about breastfeeding from breastfeeding my previous child/children	38.4% (25.1, 51.8)
Community support programs	6.4% (1.4, 11.5)
Indigenous community support programs	8.1% (2.6, 13.7)
Other	11.4% (3.6, 19.1)

#### How old was your child when you first added any other liquids (e.g. milk, formula, water, teas, herbal mixtures) or solid foods to the baby's feed?

Three months or less	56.7% (42.7, 70.6)
Four or five months	13.3% (3.6, 23.0)
6 months or more	30.1% (16.8, 43.3)

◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ Our Health Counts: Community health assessment by the people, for the people ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆



For the full OHC Toronto report visit:  
[www.welllivinghouse.com](http://www.welllivinghouse.com)