



# TOTS Brief

The Oklahoma Toddler Survey

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## Birth Control Use at Two-Years Postpartum

Two years between pregnancies is the World Health Organization's recommended spacing for women to promote healthy pregnancies and deliveries. A recent study found that spacing not only impacts the mother and infant, but can adversely affect the cognitive and behavioral health of the older child, when births are spaced less than 24 months apart.<sup>1</sup>

To better understand the issue of pregnancy spacing in Oklahoma, The Oklahoma Toddler Survey (TOTS) asked mothers about the use of birth control at two-years postpartum, and for those who reported not using birth control, their primary reason.

Overall, 49.5% of mothers with toddlers in 2006-2010 were

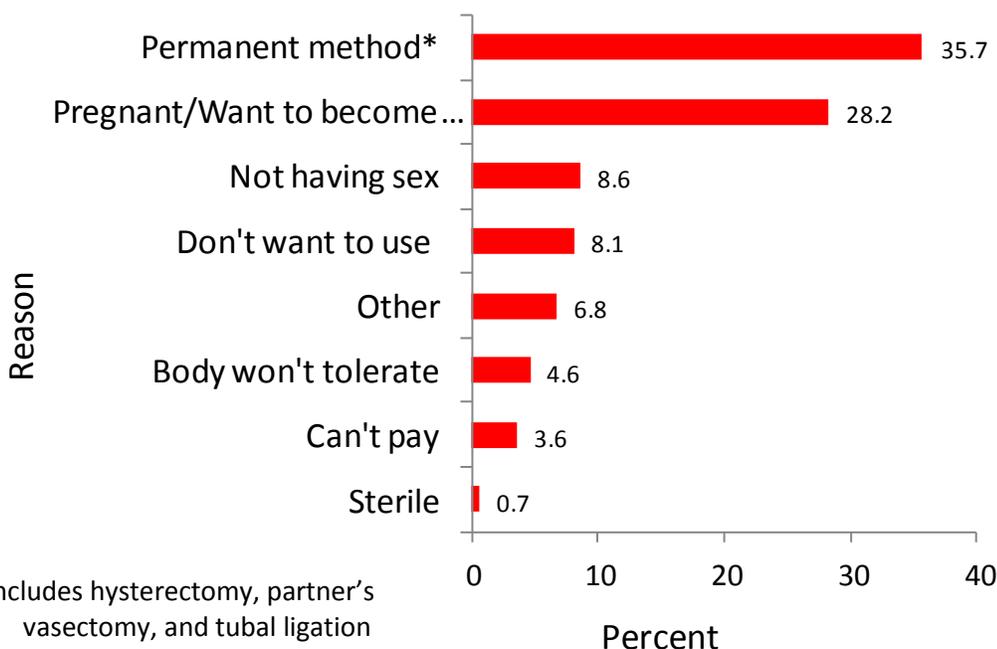
using birth control at two-years postpartum.

Among the 50.5% who were not using a birth control method at two-years postpartum, more than one-third reported it was due to permanent methods (35.7%), such as having had a hysterectomy, tubal ligation or a partner's vasectomy, Figure 1. Twenty-eight percent stated it was because they were pregnant

### In Oklahoma:

- Approximately half of mothers with live infants in Oklahoma were using birth control at two-years postpartum.
- The most common reason for not using birth control at two-years postpartum was use of permanent methods, such as tubal ligation and vasectomy.
- Birth control use at two-years postpartum has increased since 2008, among adult and teen mothers with a history of Medicaid/SoonerCare use.

**Figure 1. Reasons for Not Using Birth Control at Two-Years Postpartum, TOTS 2006-2010**



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or trying to become pregnant. Eight percent stated they did not want to use birth control and 8.6% reported they were abstinent. Written-in comments under "Other" included: breastfeeding; recently delivered a new baby; waiting for an appointment; cannot find the right method; and, religious concerns/beliefs.

Having a subsequent pregnancy by two-years postpartum and maternal age (teen vs. adult) contributed to differences in birth control use at two-years postpartum.

Thirty-seven percent of mothers with at least one subsequent pregnancy reported using birth control at two-years postpartum. This compares to 54.5% of women with no subsequent pregnancy at two years postpartum.

Teen mothers (<20 years of age) were more likely to use birth control at two-years postpartum compared to adults (56.9% vs. 48.4%). The most common reason for not using birth control for adults was use of a permanent method. For teens, the most common reason was

they were pregnant or wanted to become pregnant.

Among teen mothers using birth control at two-years postpartum, 87.6% had Medicaid-funded services for prenatal care or delivery two-years prior compared to 52.4% for older mothers who were using birth control at TOTS. There was no significant difference between groups of mothers who did or did not use birth control and their Medicaid status at the toddler's birth.

Among those using birth control at two-years postpartum, the rate increased, from 2008 to 2010, among both teen and adult mothers who had Medicaid-funded services for prenatal or delivery care, Figure 2.

For more information on Oklahoma's family planning programs call your local county health department or visit: <http://www.ok.gov/health/>

**Reference:**  
1. Crowne SS, Gonsalves K, Burrell L. Relationship between birth spacing, child maltreatment, and child behavior and development outcomes among at-risk families. October 2012. *MCH Journal* 16(7), pp. 1413-1420.

The Oklahoma Toddler Survey (TOTS) is a two-year follow-back survey to the Oklahoma Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS) survey. Mothers with live infants who respond to the PRAMS survey are sent a TOTS survey the month their children turn two-years-old. TOTS is a mixed-mode surveillance system. Two mail surveys are sent in an effort to gain participation followed by telephone surveillance for non-respondents. The unweighted response rate for 2011 data was 70.0% (n=1,396). Data were weighted to represent the two-year-old's birth cohort for those years. Prevalence rates were calculated using the Cochran-Mantel-Haenszel Chi-Square ( $\chi^2$ ) Test.

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**Figure 2. Percent of Mothers With Medicaid-funded Prenatal or Delivery Care Using Birth Control at Two-Years Postpartum, TOTS 2006-**

