



# FACT SHEET

## Teen Sexual Activity, Pregnancy and Childbearing Among Black<sup>1</sup> Teens

DECEMBER 2007

### Highlights:

- § Black teens have the highest teen pregnancy rate among the major racial/ethnic groups in the U.S.
- § Black teens are more likely to be sexually experienced and to have more sexual partners than U.S. teens of other racial/ethnic groups.
- § The Black teen pregnancy and birth rates are decreasing faster than the overall U.S. teen pregnancy and birth rates.

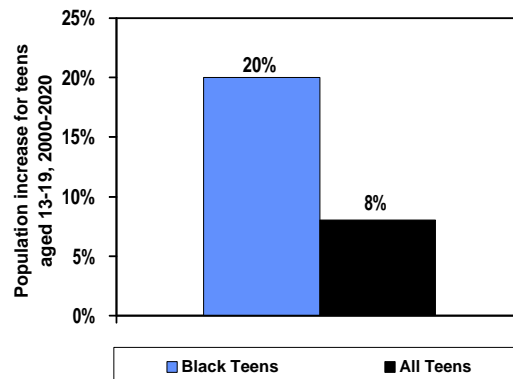


### Blacks and the U.S. Population

Blacks currently constitute approximately 13% of the total U.S. population, making them the second largest minority group in the United States. In 2005, an estimated 1.7 million girls between the ages of 15 and 19 were Black, approximately 17% of all 15- to 19-year-old girls.<sup>2</sup>

From 2000 to 2020, the Black population is projected to increase to over 45 million. By 2020, approximately 14% of the U.S. population and 17% of U.S. teens aged 13 to 19 will be Black. The growth rate of the Black teen population is greater than that of the overall teen population — between 2000 and 2020 the Black population of 13- to 19-year-olds will grow 20% while the total 13- to 19-year-old population will increase only by 8%.<sup>3</sup>

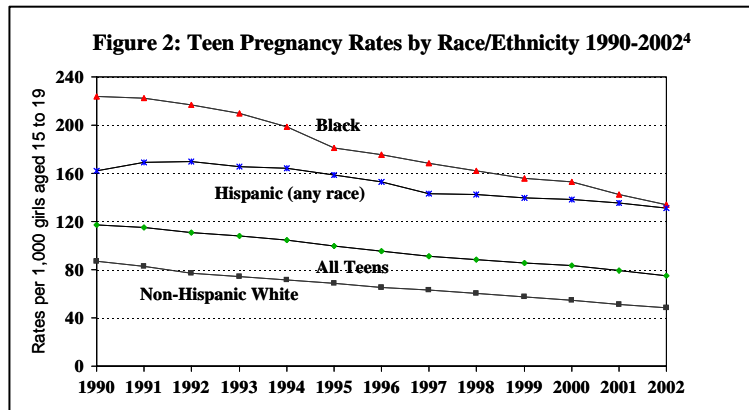
Figure 1: The growth of the Black teen population between 2000 and 2020 is expected to be more than twice that of the overall U.S. teen population during those same years.<sup>4</sup>



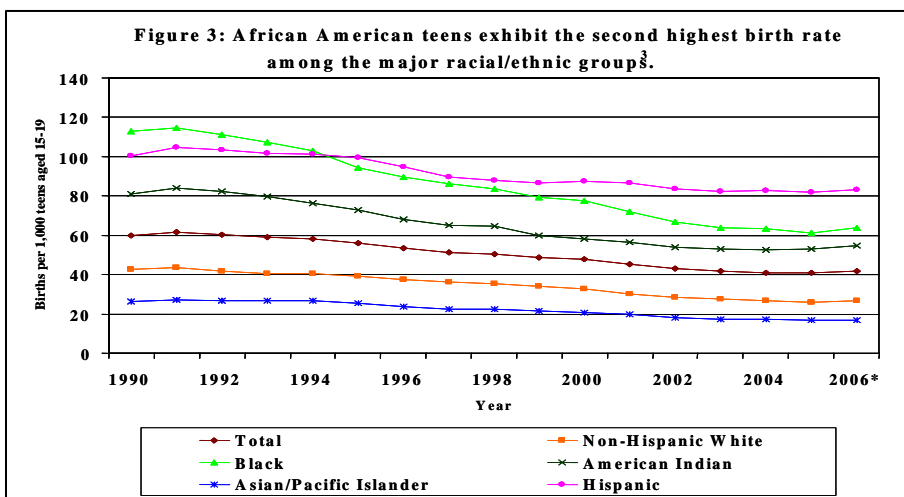
### Black Teen Pregnancy Rates

In 2002 (latest year available), Black girls aged 15 to 19 had a pregnancy rate of 134.2 per 1,000, well above the national average of 75.4 per 1,000 15- to 19-year-old girls.<sup>4</sup> While 31% of girls in the U.S. become pregnant at least once as a teen, for Black girls this proportion is 58%.<sup>5</sup> In 2002, 19% of sexually experienced 15- to 19-year old Black males reported having caused a pregnancy, versus 13% of all sexually experienced males aged 15 to 19.<sup>6</sup>

The Black teen pregnancy rate decreased 40% between 1990 and 2002, more than the overall U.S. teen pregnancy rate decrease of 36% during that same time period (Figure 2). Although the percentage decrease of the Black teen pregnancy rate from 1990 to 2002 was close to that of the non-Hispanic White teen pregnancy rate (45% decrease) and much greater than that of the Hispanic teen pregnancy rate (19% decrease), Black teens still have the highest teen pregnancy rate among the major racial/ethnic groups in the U.S.<sup>4</sup>



### Black Teen Birth Rates



Beginning in 1995, Black teens no longer had the highest teen birth rate among the racial/ethnic groups with rates available, but even so, Black teen birth rates remain high. In 2006, the preliminary birth rate for Black girls aged 15 to 19 was 63.7 per 1,000, up 5 percent from 60.9 in 2005, more than one-and-a-half times greater than the national rate of 41.9 per 1,000 (Figure 3). One-quarter of the approximate 435,427 births in 2006 to teens aged 15 to 19 were to Blacks.<sup>7</sup>

\* Data for 2006 are preliminary

The Black teen birth rate is lower than the birth rate for Latina teens, even though Black teens have the higher pregnancy rate, because Black teens are more likely than Latina teens to have an abortion.<sup>4</sup>

Black teen birth rates vary substantially from state to state: for 2005, birth rates for teens aged 15 to 19 ranged from 18.0 per 1,000 in Idaho to 94 per 1,000 in Wisconsin (Figure 4). The birth rate for Black teens aged 15 to 19 in the District of Columbia in 2005 was 91 per 1,000.<sup>8</sup>

From 1991 to 2006, the birth rate for Black teens steadily decreased from 114.8 per 1,000 to 63.7 per 1,000, a cumulative drop of 44.5%. This

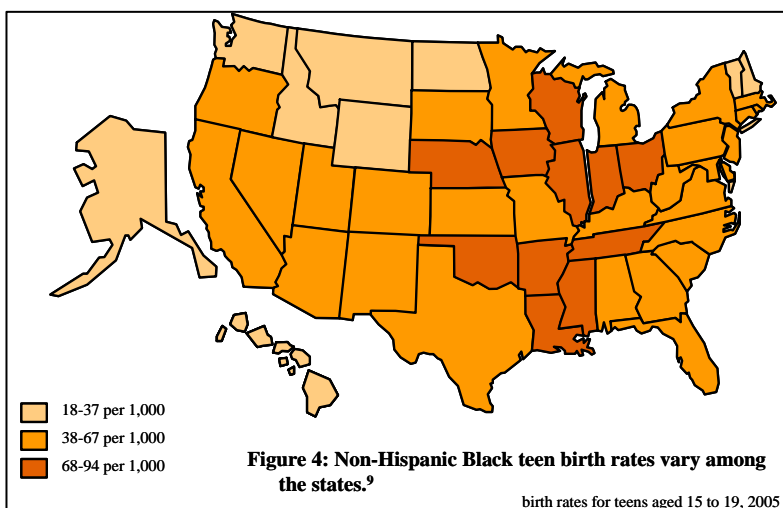
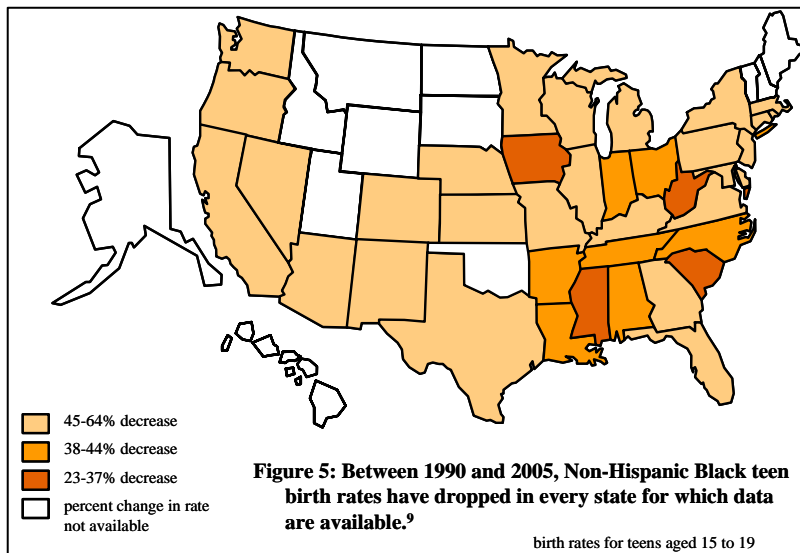


Figure 4: Non-Hispanic Black teen birth rates vary among the states.<sup>9</sup>

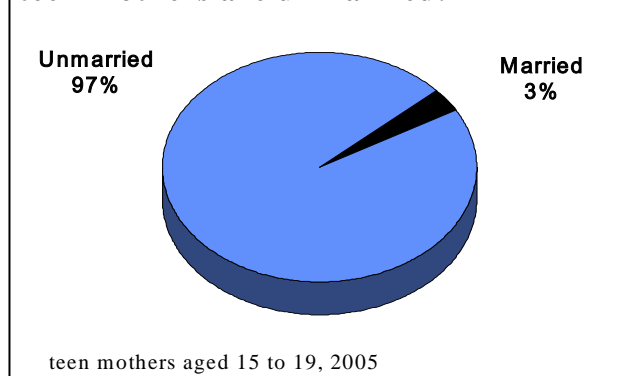
birth rates for teens aged 15 to 19, 2005

percent change was higher than the overall percent decline in birth rate for 15- to 19-year-old girls in the U.S. over the same period of time (32%).<sup>7</sup> This decrease has been highest among the younger teens (aged 15-17). For Black teens aged 15-17 the teen birth rate has decreased 51 percent and among older Black teens (18-19) the teen birth rate has decreased 36 percent.

Black teen birth rates declined between 1990 and 2005 in each of the 38 states for which there are data available for both 1990 and 2002 (Figure 5). Declines in these 38 states ranged from 23% in West Virginia to 64% in California and Washington; the rate in the District of Columbia decreased 27% in the same time period.<sup>8</sup>



**Figure 6: The vast majority of Black teen mothers are unmarried.<sup>7</sup>**



The vast majority of Black teen mothers give birth out-of-wedlock (Figure 6). In 2006, 97% of Black teens aged 15 to 19 who gave birth were unmarried, versus 83% of all teens who gave birth.<sup>7</sup>

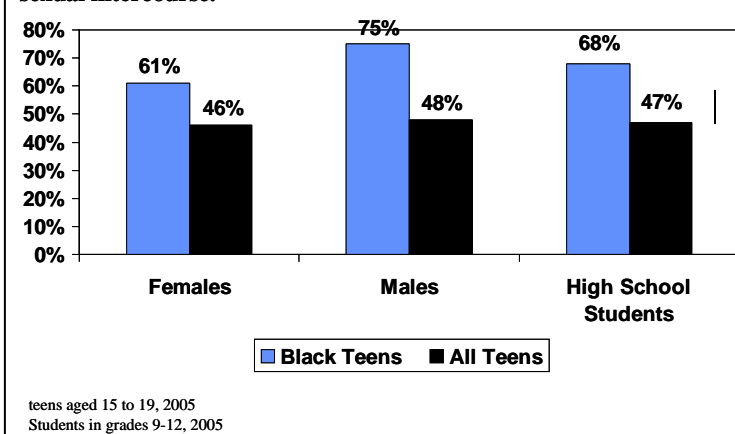


### **Sexual Activity and Contraceptive Use**

Black youth report higher than average rates of sexual activity. In 2005, 45.7% of all girls aged 15 to 19 reported ever having had sexual

intercourse, while 61.2% of all Black girls of the same age group reported ever having had sexual intercourse.<sup>9</sup> The same survey found an even more striking difference among teen boys; 74.6% of Black males aged 15 to 19 reported ever having sex, versus 47.9% of all males aged 15 to 19 (Figure 7).<sup>10</sup> Overall, 67.6% of Black high school students reported being sexually experienced compared to 46.8% of all high school students.<sup>10</sup> (Keep in mind that in-school surveys miss some Black teens – in 2000, 7% of Blacks aged 14-19 had dropped out of school.<sup>11</sup>)

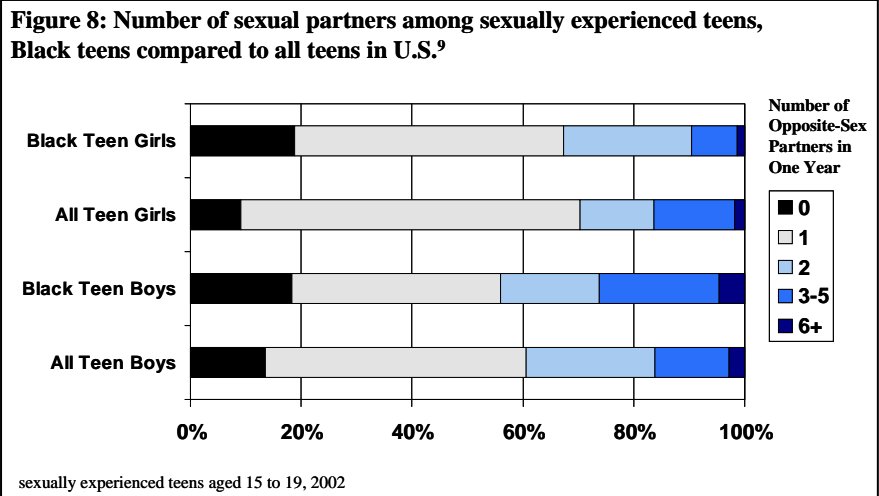
**Figure 7: A greater proportion of Black teens report ever having had sexual intercourse.<sup>9,10</sup>**



Sexually active Black teens have more sexual partners, on average, than U.S. teens of other racial/ethnic groups (Figure 8). In a nationally representative survey, 32.7% of sexually experienced female Blacks aged 15 to 19 reported having 2 or more male partners in the past year, versus 29.7% of all sexually experienced female teens. For sexually experienced Black males aged

15 to 19, 44.1% reported having 2 or more female partners in the past year, higher than the 39.4% of all teen males reporting two or more partners.<sup>9</sup>

Patterns of contraceptive use by Black teens are sometimes similar to patterns among all teens, but are sometimes strikingly different. In 2002, 71.0% of all Black girls aged 15 to 19 reported that they used a form of contraception at first sex, versus 74.5% of all girls in this age bracket.<sup>9</sup> However, among never-married *sexually active* girls aged 15 to 19 (those who reported having had sex in the past three months), 74.8% of Black teen girls



reported that they used contraception the last time they had sex, versus 83.2% of all sexually active teen girls. In 2002, consistent use of condoms (100% of the time) by sexually active boys aged 15 to 19 was more likely for Black (64.5%) boys than for all teen boys (51.5%).<sup>9</sup> In 2005, 68.9% of Black high school students used a condom at most recent sex, compared to 62.8% of all high school students.<sup>10</sup>

Recent trends in sexual activity have been mixed for Black teens. The overall proportion of girls who had sex after menarche decreased from 51.7% in 1995 to 46.8% in 2002. For Black teen girls the decline was smaller, from 60.4% to 57.0%.<sup>9</sup> The percentage of Black teen boys aged 15 to 19 that report ever having intercourse decreased from 80.6% in 1995 to 63.4% in 2002, more than the decrease in sexual activity among all male teens (from 55.3% to 46.0%).<sup>9</sup> Also, the decline in sexual experience among high school students between 1991 and 2005 was greater for all Black students (17.1% decrease) than it was for all students (13.0% decrease).<sup>10</sup>

Trends in contraceptive use are also mixed. Between 1995 and 2002, contraceptive use at first sex increased from 58.7% to 71.0% for Black girls aged 15 to 19, more than the increase from 68.2% to 74.5% for all girls aged 15 to 19. Contraceptive use at most recent sex increased from 70.7% to 83.2% for all never-married sexually active teen girls and from 73.3% to 74.8% for never-married sexually active Black teen girls in the same time period.<sup>9</sup> Condom use at most recent intercourse among Black high school students increased from 48.0% to 68.9% between 1991 and 2005, more than it increased among all students (from 46.2% to 62.8%).<sup>10</sup>

**NOTES**

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1. Note that the population section contains data for all Blacks, the sexual activity sections provide data for non-Hispanic Blacks only, and the data in the pregnancy and birth sections are mixed.
  2. Table 1: Annual Estimates of the Population by Sex and Five-Year Age Groups for the United States: April 1, 2000 to July 1, 2005 (NC-EST2005-01) and Table 4: Annual Estimates of the Population by Age and Sex of Black or African American alone or in combination for the United States: April 1, 2000 to July 1, 2005 (NC-EST2005-04-BAC) Retrieved October 17, 2006 from <http://www.census.gov/popest/national/asrh/>
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