Unintended Pregnancy and Abortion In Northern America

Model-based estimates offer an opportunity to observe and assess unintended pregnancy and abortion over time and, because they enable comparability across borders and groups, to do so for individual countries, for regions and globally. Estimates for regions and subregions, as defined by the United Nations Statistics Division groupings, can offer advocates, policymakers, researchers and others valuable insight into sexual and reproductive health and autonomy. Regional estimates can help reveal disparities and areas where continued investment is needed to ensure that individuals can access the full spectrum of quality sexual and reproductive health care.

The estimates below provide an overview of the incidence of unintended pregnancy and abortion in Northern America from 1990 through 2019; the values are based on average annual estimates for five-year time periods. View these estimates in country profiles on guttmacher.org.

Unintended pregnancy and abortion in the United States

• In the United States, the unintended pregnancy rate declined by 23% between 1990–1994 and 2015–2019.

• During the same period, the abortion rate declined by 48%.

• The share of unintended pregnancies ending in abortion fell from 50% to 34%.

• In 2015–2019, there were a total of 5,660,000 pregnancies annually.

• Of these, 2,590,000 pregnancies were unintended and 886,000 ended in abortion.

Unintended pregnancy and abortion in Canada

• In Canada, the unintended pregnancy rate increased by 22% between 1990–1994 and 2015–2019.

• During the same period, the abortion rate declined by 13%.

• The share of unintended pregnancies ending in abortion fell from 51% to 37%.

• In 2015–2019, there were a total of 570,000 pregnancies annually.

• Of these, 265,000 pregnancies were unintended and 97,500 ended in abortion.

Note: Guttmacher has a separate, extensive body of work around unintended pregnancy and abortion in the United States. The findings in this fact sheet are broadly aligned with those from our US-specific work, but they rely on a different methodology and are not directly comparable. There are contexts in which it may be more appropriate to use one body of work over the other: Comparisons of the United States with other countries should rely on the estimates included here, which were generated using the same methodology across all other countries and regions. In contrast, our US work should be used when focusing solely on the United States; it includes year-specific trends and information on how unintended pregnancy and abortion vary between population groups.
**Sources**


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