



# **Brief:** **Extreme heat worsens inequities in maternal and newborn health**

**In the US, Black pregnant and birthing people are inequitably impacted by extreme heat.**

Pregnancy health is often omitted from public health efforts to raise awareness about extreme heat in the US. And even where pregnant people are included in “vulnerable populations” lists, the reality that racial and other injustices make heat an inconvenience to some pregnant people but a serious health challenge to others is glossed over.

## **MATERNAL HEALTH**

- Higher risk for gestational diabetes, hypertension, spontaneous abortion, and renal disease.
- Increased risk of maternal hospitalization and longer hospital stays during birth.

## **INFANT HEALTH**

- Maternal heat exposure linked to higher risk of preterm birth, low birthweight, and stillbirth.
- Linked to birth defects including congenital heart defects, and neural tube defects.
- Increased infant death linked to increased temperatures.

**By the end of the century, 42,000 additional babies will be born preterm every year due to extreme heat.**

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Include pregnant and birthing people and their infants in public awareness messaging re: heat, including resources like cooling centers.
- Ensure pregnant workers are aware of their rights—Pregnancy Workers Fairness Act.
- Join us: [IgnitingImpactTogether.org](https://www.ignitingimpacttogether.org)