

## Health Fact Sheets

# Trends in Canadian births, 1992 to 2012



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- not available for any reference period
- .. not available for a specific reference period
- ... not applicable
- 0 true zero or a value rounded to zero
- 0<sup>s</sup> value rounded to 0 (zero) where there is a meaningful distinction between true zero and the value that was rounded
- <sup>P</sup> preliminary
- <sup>r</sup> revised
- X suppressed to meet the confidentiality requirements of the *Statistics Act*
- <sup>E</sup> use with caution
- F too unreliable to be published
- \* significantly different from reference category ( $p < 0.05$ )

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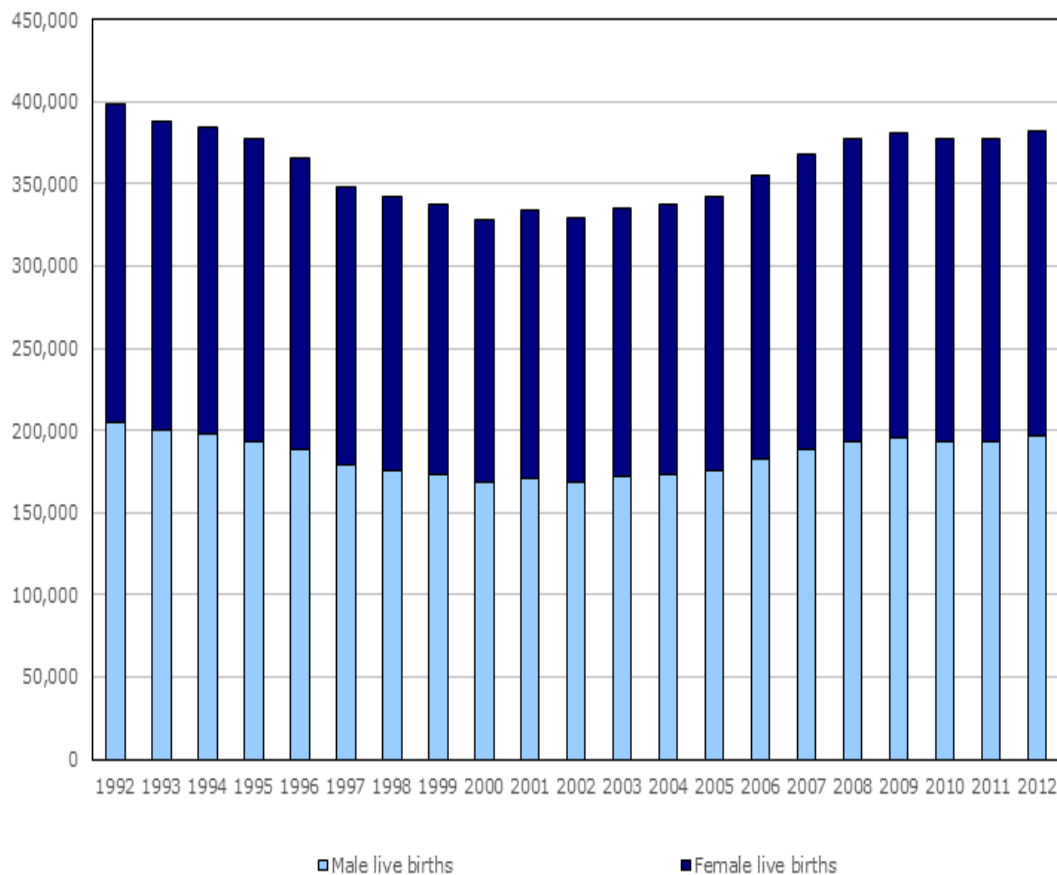
## Health Fact Sheets Trends in Canadian births, 1992 to 2012



There were 381,869 live births in 2012, of which 196,446 (51.4%) were males and 185,423 (48.6%) were females (Chart 1). The vast majority (96.8%) of live births in Canada were single births, down from 97.9% in 1992.<sup>1</sup> Conversely, multiple births accounted for a greater proportion of live births in 2012 than they did in 1992 (3.2% compared to 2.1%). In general, the percentage of live births that are multiple births has gradually increased since 1992, whereas the percentage of live births that were single births decreased over this twenty-one year period.

**Chart 1**  
Total live births, by sex, Canada, 1992 to 2012

number of live births



Source: Vital Statistics: Birth Database.

In 2012, more than one-third of all live births (37.1%) were born to mothers residing in Ontario, nearly one-quarter (23.3%) in Quebec, 13.8% in Alberta, and 11.5% to mothers living in British Columbia (Table 1). Combined, these four provinces accounted for 85.7% of all live births with 86.1% of the country's population. The remaining provinces and territories

accounted for 14.3% of all live births in Canada. Despite having a smaller population, Alberta surpassed British Columbia in terms of live births in 2004 and has continued this trend through to 2012.

**Table 1**

**Proportionate shares of Canada's live births and overall population, by province and territory, 2012**

Provinces and territories	Live births in 2012	Share of Canada's 2012 live births	Share of Canada's 2012 population
	number	percent	percent
Ontario	141,597	37.1	38.6
Quebec	88,929	23.3	23.3
Alberta	52,634	13.8	11.2
British Columbia	44,008	11.5	13.1
Manitoba	16,358	4.3	3.6
Saskatchewan	14,850	3.9	3.1
Nova Scotia	8,774	2.3	2.7
New Brunswick	7,059	1.8	2.2
Newfoundland and Labrador	4,382	1.1	1.5
Prince Edward Island	1,312	0.3	0.4
Nunavut	843	0.2	0.1
Northwest Territories	688	0.2	0.1
Yukon	435	0.1	0.1

**Sources:** Vital Statistics: Birth Database and Statistics Canada: Estimates of population, July 1, 2015-09-28, CANSIM Table 051-0001 ([www.statcan.gc.ca/cansim/a05?lang=eng&id=0510001](http://www.statcan.gc.ca/cansim/a05?lang=eng&id=0510001)).

Among all live births in Canada, the average age of mothers at time of delivery was 29.8 years in 2012, up from 29.0 in 2002 and 27.9 in 1992.<sup>2</sup> Only British Columbia (30.5 years), Ontario (30.3 years), Yukon (29.9 years) and Quebec (29.8 years) had average ages higher than or equal to the national average in 2012. Nunavut had the lowest average age (24.9 years), followed by Saskatchewan (27.9 years), New Brunswick (28.1 years), Northwest Territories (28.2 years) and Manitoba (28.3 Years). The average age of mothers in Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Labrador, Prince Edward Island and Alberta ranged from 28.7 to 29.4 years, respectively.

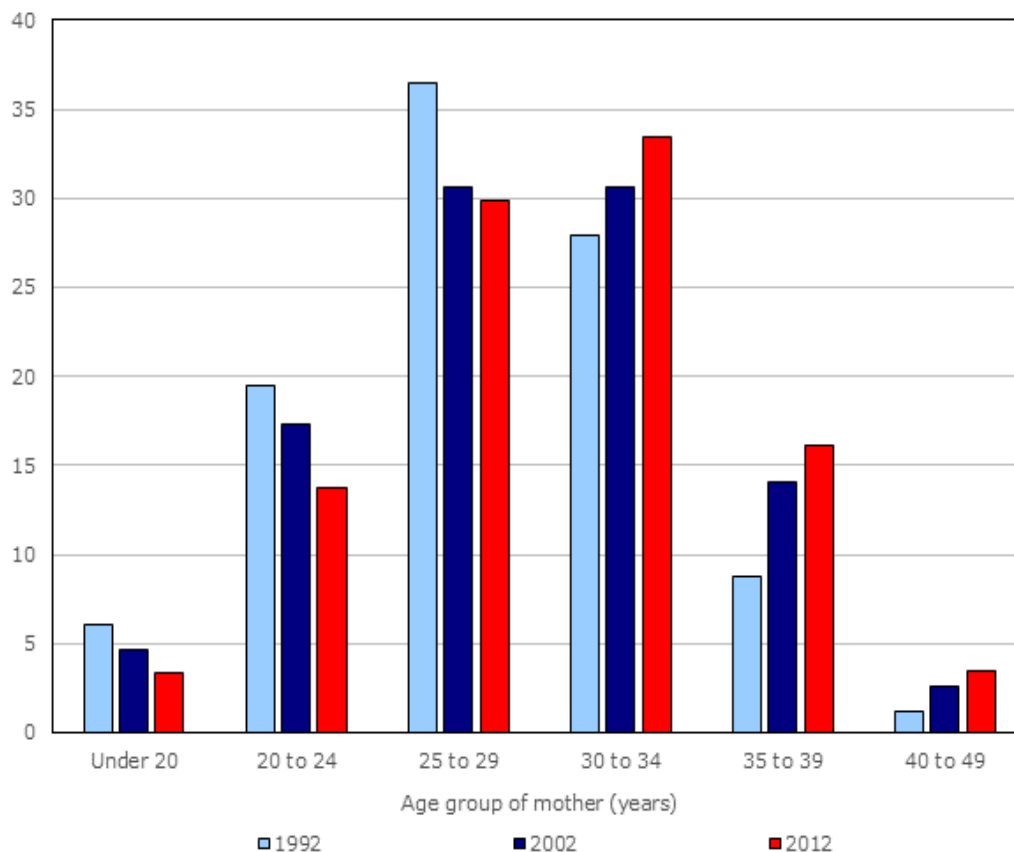
### **Increasing share of live births among women 30 years and older**

The vast majority of babies were born to mothers 20 to 39 years old. Excluding cases where age of mother was unknown, 93.1% of all Canadian live births in 2012 were born to mothers aged 20 to 39 years, up slightly from 92.6% in 2002 and 92.7% in 1992. The proportion of live births born to mothers 30 to 49 years old has notably increased since 1992. Conversely, the share of live births born to mothers younger than 30 years of age markedly decreased during this period (Chart 2). Over one-half (53.1%) of all live births in 2012 were born to mothers between 30 and 49 years old, up from 47.4% in 2002 and 37.9% in 1992. Similarly, 3.5% of all live births in 2012 were born to mothers between 40 and 49, compared with 2.6% in 2002 and 1.2% in 1992.

Less than one-half (46.9%) of all live births in 2012 were born to mothers younger than 30 years of age, compared to over one-half (52.6%) in 2002 and nearly two-thirds (62.1%) in 1992. The percentage of live births born to mothers younger than 20 also decreased over this period (6.1% in 1992, 4.7% in 2002, and 3.4% in 2012).

**Chart 2**  
**Live births, by age group of mother, Canada, 1992, 2002, and 2012**

percent



**Source:** Vital Statistics: Birth Database.

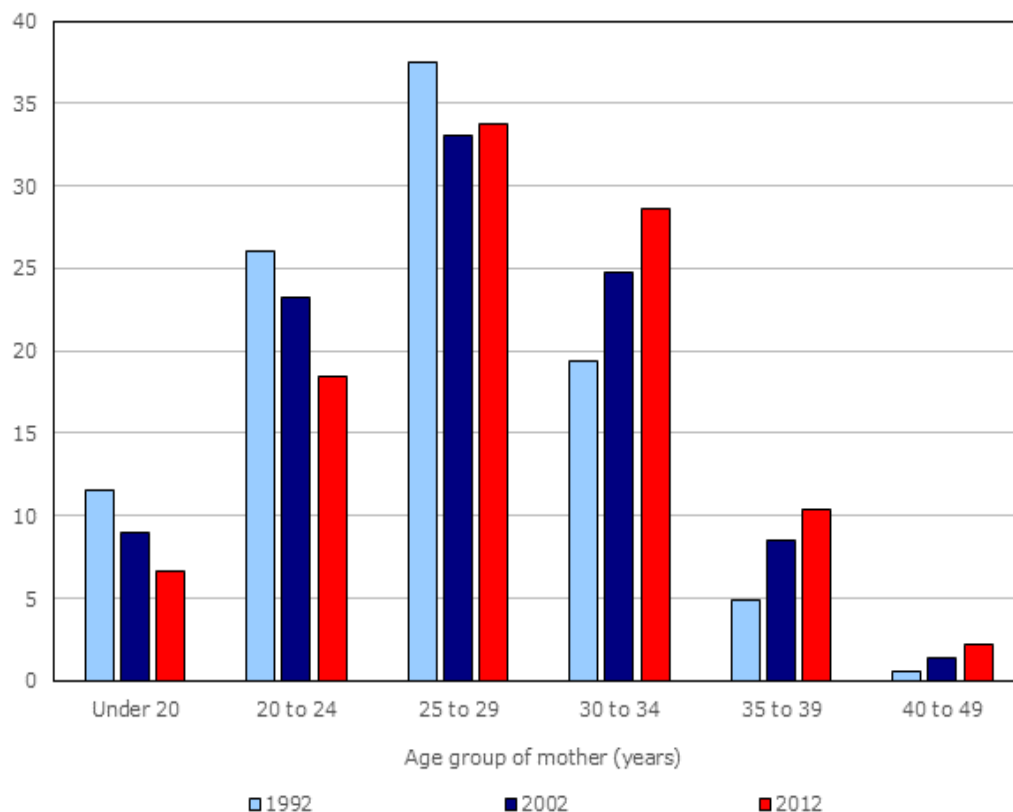
Among all age groups, women aged 30 to 34 years recorded the most live births in Newfoundland and Labrador, Quebec, Ontario, Alberta, British Columbia, and the Yukon in 2012.<sup>3</sup> In Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and the Northwest Territories, it was mothers 25 to 29 years old that had the most babies, while Nunavut had the highest number of its live births born to women 20 to 24 years old.

### **Women delaying birth of first child**

The last two decades have shown a tendency for women to delay having their first child. Between 1992 and 2012, the proportion of all first births born to women 30 to 49 years old substantially increased. Excluding cases where age of mother was not stated, mothers aged 30 to 34 accounted for 28.6% of first-born live births in 2012, up from 19.3% in 1992 (Chart 3). Similarly, mothers aged 35 to 39 years increased their share of first births from 4.9% in 1992 to 10.4% in 2012 and mothers aged 40 to 49 increased their share of first births from 0.6% to 2.2%. Conversely, the share of first births born to women under 30 years notably decreased during the last twenty-one years. The largest decrease occurred among mothers aged 20 to 24 who accounted for 26.1% of all first births in 1992 and 18.5% in 2012. Mothers aged 25 to 29 years accounted for 37.5% of all first births in 1992, but 33.7% in 2012, while mothers younger than 20 years decreased from 11.6% in 1992 to only 6.6% in 2012.

**Chart 3**  
**First-born live births, by age group of mother, Canada, 1992, 2002, and 2012**

percent



**Source:** Vital Statistics: Birth Database.

In 2012, 43.7% of all live births were the mothers' first live birth (first born), 35.4% were second births, 13.5% were third births, 4.5% were fourth births, 1.5% were fifth births, and 1.3% were to mothers having their sixth or higher live birth.<sup>4</sup> These proportions have been very consistent annually over the last twenty-one years.

**Notes**

- 1 Vital Statistics: Birth Database, CANSIM Table 102-4515 and Table 102-4513.
- 2 Vital Statistics: Birth Database, CANSIM Table 102-4504.
- 3 Vital Statistics: Birth Database, CANSIM Table 102-4503.
- 4 Vital Statistics: Birth Database, CANSIM Table 102-4508.

**Data**

Additional data on Canadian births and characteristics of mothers are available in CANSIM tables 102-4501 to 102-4513.