

Pregnancy and neonates: low birth weight

NICE indicator

Published: 1 August 2014

www.nice.org.uk/indicators/ind22

Indicator

The proportion of full-term births where the child has a low birth weight.

Indicator type

Network / system level indicator.

The indicator would be appropriate to understand and report on the performance of networks or systems of providers.

This document does not represent formal NICE guidance. For a full list of NICE indicators, see our [menu of indicators](#).

To find out how to use indicators and how we develop them, see our [NICE indicator process guide](#).

Rationale

Birthweight is a strong indicator of both maternal health and chances of survival, growth, long-term health and psychosocial development in newborn babies. High rates of low-birth-weight babies can suggest a need to improve antenatal care and health promotion during pregnancy.

Source guidance

- Maternal and child nutrition: nutrition and weight management in pregnancy, and nutrition in children up to 5 years. NICE guideline NG247 (2025)
- Antenatal care. NICE guideline NG201 (2021)

Specification

Numerator: The number of babies in the denominator with a low birthweight (less than 2,500 g).

Denominator: The number of live births at term (greater than 36 weeks) with a recorded birthweight.

Calculation: Numerator divided by the denominator, multiplied by 100.

Exclusions: None.

Data source: NHS England Maternity Services Data Set.

Minimum population: The indicator would be appropriate to assess the performance of networks or systems of providers.

Update information

Minor changes since publication

January 2025: The source guidance was updated following the publication of NICE's guideline on maternal and child nutrition: nutrition and weight management in pregnancy,

and nutrition in children up to 5 years.

ISBN: 978-1-4731-5532-9