Prevalence of congenital anomalies

Update: October 2025

Table 1 presents detailed data for the prevalence of specific anomalies, isolated or combined with other anomalies. A child with multiple anomalies is counted more than once. The prevalence for 1981-2023 was calculated per 10 000 births for:

1) all types of births (total prevalence), and

2) for live births only (live birth prevalence)

For anomalies that can be detected prenatally, large differences are visible between total prevalence and live birth prevalence, such as for anencephaly (a lethal condition) with a total prevalence of 3.8 per 10 000 and a live birth prevalence of 0.5 per 10 000.

The prevalence of the various congenital anomalies in other European countries participating in EUROCAT can be found on the EUROCAT network website

Table 1. Total prevalence and live birth prevalence of congenital anomalies per 10 000 births, 1981-2023

Congenital anomaly	All births		Live births	
	n	prev.	n	prev.
Nervous system anomalies	**1 645**	**23.5**	**948**	**13.6**
Neural tube defects	742	10.6	289	4.2
Anencephaly and similar	266	3.8	32	0.5
Spina bifida	401	5.7	229	3.3
Encephalocele / meningocele*	75	1.1	28	0.4
Severe microcephaly*	205	2.9	181	2.6
Arhinencephaly / holoprosencephaly*	83	1.2	31	0.4
Hydrocephaly*	266	3.8	159	2.3
Agenesis of corpus callosum*	108	1.5	74	1.1
Eye anomalies	**518**	**7.4**	**497**	**7.1**
Anophthalmos / microphthalmos	106	1.5	90	1.3
Congenital cataract	183	2.6	181	2.6
Congenital glaucoma	31	0.4	31	0.4
Ear, face and neck anomalies	**225**	**3.2**	**204**	**2.9**
Anotia and atresia / stenosis / stricture of external auditory canal	100	1.4	93	1.3

Congenital anomaly	All births		Live births	
	n	prev.	n	prev.
Congenital heart defects	**5 376**	**76.9**	**4 828**	**69.4**
Severe congenital heart defects	2,001	28.6	1,653	23.8
Common arterial truncus	58	0.8	46	0.7
Double outlet right ventricle	113	1.6	89	1.3
Complete transposition of great arteries (D-TGA)	292	4.2	272	3.9
Single ventricle	58	0.8	39	0.6
Corrected transposition of great arteries (L-TGA)	40	0.6	33	0.5
Ventricular septal defect (VSD)	2 484	35.5	2,325	33.4
Muscular VSD	1 001	14.3	969	13.9
Perimembraneous VSD	655	9.4	621	8.9
Atrial septal defect (ASD)	754	10.8	700	10.1
Atrioventricular septal defect (AVSD)	372	5.3	276	4.0
Tetralogy and pentalogy of Fallot	240	3.4	206	3.0
Tricuspid atresia and stenosis	97	1.4	70	1.0
Ebstein's anomaly	47	0.7	35	0.5
Pulmonary valve stenosis	544	7.8	536	7.7
Pulmonary valve atresia	99	1.4	76	1.1

Congenital anomaly	All births		Live births	
	n	prev.	n	prev.
Aortic valve atresia / stenosis	178	2.5	166	2.4
Bicuspid aortic valve	248	3.5	229	3.3
Mitral valve atresia / stenosis	50	0.7	43	0.6
Hypoplastic left heart (HLH/HLHS)	216	3.1	123	1.8
Coarctation of aorta	334	4.8	319	4.6
Aortic atresia / interrupted aortic arch	38	0.5	34	0.5
Total anomalous pulmonary venous return (TAPVR)	59	0.8	55	0.8
Respiratory anomalies	**266**	**3.8**	**198**	**2.8**
Choanal stenosis or atresia	63	0.9	60	0.9
Oro-facial clefts*	**1 526**	**21.8**	**1,377**	**19.8**
Cleft lip with or without cleft palate*	1 009	14.4	902	13.0
Cleft palate*	517	7.4	475	6.8
Gastro-intestinal anomalies*	**1 301**	**18.6**	**1 098**	**15.8**
Oesophageal atresia with or without tracheo-oesophageal fistula	188	2.7	170	2.4
Duodenal atresia or stenosis*	76	1.1	65	0.9
Atresia or stenosis of other parts of small intestine*	62	0.9	58	0.8
Ano-rectal atresia / stenosis	307	4.4	236	3.4
Hirschsprung's disease	112	1.6	112	1.6
Atresia of bile ducts	42	0.6	42	0.6
Annular pancreas	42	0.6	38	0.5
Anomalies of intestinal fixation*	161	2.3	118	1.7
Diaphragmatic hernia	196	2.8	146	2.1
Genital anomalies	**1 549**	**22.1**	**1 464**	**21.0**
Hypospadias	1 348	19.3	1,337	19.2

Congenital anomaly	All births		Live births	
	n	prev.	n	prev.
Congenital anomalies of kidney and urinary tract (CAKUT)*#	**2 526**	**36.1**	**2 138**	**30.7**
Unilateral renal agenesis	224	3.2	173	2.5
Bilateral renal agenesis including Potter sequence	141	2.0	60	0.9
Multicystic renal dysplasia	245	3.5	205	2.9
Congenital hydronephrosis including ureter obstructions*#	972	13.9	925	13.3
Vesico-uretero-renal reflux grade 3-5 (VUR)	313	4.5	313	4.5
Lobulated, fused and horseshoe kidney and ectopic kidney	186	2.7	132	1.9
Bladder exstrophy and/or epispadias	77	1.1	62	0.9
Posterior urethral valves	132	1.9	127	1.8
Prune belly syndrome	23	0.3	13	0.2
Limb anomalies*	**4 206**	**60.1**	**3 860**	**55.5**
limb reduction defects (LRD)	467	6.7	363	5.2
Transverse LRD	82	1.2	57	0.8
Longitudinal preaxial LRD	87	1.2	64	0.9
Longitudinal postaxial LRD	42	0.6	36	0.5
Longitudinal central LRD	46	0.7	39	0.6
Intercalary LRD	13	0.2	7	0.1
Clubfoot - talipes equinovarus*	847	12.1	759	10.9
Hip dislocation*^	683	9.8	680	9.8
Polydactyly	753	10.8	700	10.1
Syndactyly	352	5.0	296	4.3
Abdominal wall defects	**384**	**5.5**	**173**	**2.5**
Omphalocele	257	3.7	109	1.6
Gastroschisis	104	1.5	63	0.9

Congenital anomaly	All births		Live births	
	n	prev.	n	prev.
Genetic disorders (genetic syndromes, hereditary skin disorders, skeletal dysplasias and chromosomal anomalies)	**4 220**	**60.3**	**2 721**	**39.1**
Skeletal dysplasias	231	3.3	167	2.4
Down syndrome / trisomy 21	1 232	17.6	702	10.1
Patau syndrome / trisomy 13	130	1.9	40	0.6
Edwards syndrome / trisomy 18	373	5.3	65	0.9
Turner syndrome	240	3.4	110	1.6
Triploidy and polyploidy	100	1.4	14	0.2
Other anomalies / syndromes				
Craniosynostosis	157	2.2	153	2.2
Congenital constriction bands / amniotic band sequence	55	0.8	30	0.4
Situs inversus	58	0.8	47	0.7
VACTERL association	85	1.2	71	1.0
Pierre-Robin sequence	84	1.2	83	1.2

Only major congenital anomalies are shown, according to EUROCAT definitions. For more information see https://eu-rd-platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/system/files/public/eurocat/Guide_1.5_Chapter_3.2.pdf
All types of births are included: live births, still births, foetal deaths regardless of gestational age and terminations of pregnancy for foetal anomaly
* Only primary anomalies are shown. Club feet due to a neural tube defect or Potter sequence are not counted as clubfeet. For more information see the EUROCAT subgroups at https://eu-rd-platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/system/files/public/eurocat/Guide_1.5_Chapter_3.3.pdf
# Vesicourethral reflux (VUR) is included in the CAKUT and hydronephrosis subgroup
^ from the year 2015 onwards we do not register hip dysplasia anymore (we only register hip dislocation)