



BLACK MATERNAL HEALTH WEEK

THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF THE BLACK MATERNAL HEALTH CRISIS

The modern field of gynecology was built on the medical experimentation of Black enslaved women. Dr. Sims, who is considered the father of modern gynecology used multiple Black enslaved women to test the modern speculum used for pap smears without proper medication or anesthesia based off the **implicit bias that Black women don't experience pain or need comfort during medical procedures**. These incidents of medical experimentation combined with long histories of medical racism and medical experimentation, have fostered a **deep sense of mistrust of medical providers for Black mothers and birthing persons**. Said distrust **often results in Black mamas or birthing persons missing critical prenatal and preventive care that can promote healthy birth outcomes** (Washington, 2006; Covert 2010).

BLACK MAMAS

Is a term used in solidarity with the Black maternal health movement led by Black women, acknowledging the sociocultural importance of all folks who raise children in some capacity, whether they biologically birthed a child or not. Black birthing persons acknowledges gender fluidity and the gender spectrum. Not all Black Mamas identify as cisgender Black women. Thusly, this term celebrates the diversity of all child-raising individuals.



3X

Black mothers die at 3x the rate of their white counterparts during childbirth (CDC, Black Mammamas Matter Alliance)

50%

Black mothers and birthing persons have 50% more preterm births than any other group in the US (March of Dimes, 2022)

CONNECTING BLACK MATERNAL BIRTHING CRISIS AND INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

- Social factors that can influence maternal health that can be greatly exacerbated by an individual experiencing IPV, include unstable housing, transportation access, food insecurity, substance use, violence, and racial and economic inequality (CDC).
- Expectant mothers abused during pregnancy are twice as likely to miss pertinent prenatal care and start their prenatal care later in the pregnancy contributing to poor birth outcomes.
- Poor nutrition and inadequate gestational weight gain have also been associated with experiencing abuse during pregnancy. Several studies have documented an association between IPV during pregnancy and poor weight gain. (NIH)
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CELEBRATING BLACK MAMAS, BIRTHING PERSONS, AND BLACK FAMILIES THROUGH 2022 BLACK MATERNAL HEALTH WEEK

While Black mamas and birthing persons face incredible odds in birthing, Black maternal health week strives to acknowledge the immense contributions of Black led movements and organizations to Black maternal health, Black women who led this work, and the magical ways Black mamas and birthing persons create thriving, healthy families and communities.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

Resources

Review and share resources through Black Mamas Matter Alliance <https://blackmamasmatter.org/>

Learn

Join us for a panel, **From Birth To Care: An Intersectional Conversation on Black Maternal Health and Intimate Partner Violence**, to learn more about the connections between intimate partner violence and Black Maternal Health.

Support

House of Ruth Maryland provides services to many expecting mothers. To donate essential items, visit <https://tinyurl.com/2p97mne3>.



House of Ruth
Maryland