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One in three births in Austria is a caesarean section

Trend towards later motherhood –average age of mothers at the time of giving birth was 31.7 years in 2025

Vienna, 2026-06-16 – In 2025, 32.8% of the total 75 437 live births in Austria were delivered by caesarean section, as Statistics Austria reports. 4 946 babies, or 6.6%, were born prematurely before 37 weeks of pregnancy. There were sex-specific differences in birth measurements: girls weighed an average of 3 273 g and were 50.6 cm long. Boys were slightly heavier and taller, with an average birth weight of 3 398 g and a length of 51.2 cm.

“In 2025, one in three babies in Austria was born by caesarean section. In 1995, when this method of delivery was first recorded statistically, the proportion stood at 12.4%. The sharp rise over the past 30 years is partly due to the fact that women are becoming mothers later in life and that the likelihood of a caesarean section increases with age. In 2025, women aged 35 and over gave birth by caesarean section around 1.6 times more frequently than those under 25,” says Manuela Lenk, Director General Statistics at Statistics Austria.

Regional differences in caesarean section births and a trend towards later motherhood

There are significant regional differences in caesarean section rates (see table 2). Styria recorded the highest rate at 38.5%, followed by Vienna (33.7%) and Carinthia (33.1%). Salzburg and Upper Austria had the lowest caesarean section rates, at 29.2% each, followed by Vorarlberg (30.2%). However, the sharpest increase compared with the previous year was found in Vorarlberg (+1.6 percentage points), while Tyrol recorded a decrease of 0.8 percentage points (2025: 32.7%).

The trend towards later motherhood continued in 2025 (see table 1a). The average age of mothers at birth was 31.7 years, which is 3.7 years higher than in 1995 (28.0 years). Women giving birth for the first time were on average 30.5 years old in 2025 – an increase of 4.3 years since 1995. At the same time, the proportion of younger mothers fell significantly: only 10.4% of women were under 25 at the time of birth (1995: 28.0%). In contrast, the proportion of mothers aged 35 and over almost tripled, standing at 26.1% in 2025 (1995: 9.0%). Births to mothers under 20 years of age accounted for just 1.0% in 2025 (1995: 4.4%), while 5.0% of births were to mothers aged 40 and over (1995: 1.2%).

With later motherhood, the likelihood of a caesarean section also increases. In 2025, women aged 35 and over were around 1.6 times more likely to give birth by caesarean section than those under 25 (40.4% compared with 25.0%).

An important medical indication for caesarean sections is the position of the baby in the womb. In cases of abnormal vertex presentation, 54.3% of births were delivered by caesarean section; in cases of breech presentation, 95.5%; and in cases of transverse presentation, 97.4%. Multiple births also predominantly took place via caesarean section (77.5% of twin and triplet births).

Only around one per cent of babies are born at home

The vast majority of children (98.5%) were born in hospital also in 2025. 163 births (0.2%) took place in a maternity centre or a midwifery practice. 853 babies (1.1%) were born at their mother's home, and 42 were born on the way to hospital (see table 1a).

7% of babies born prematurely; multiple births remain rare

In 2025, 93.1% of live births took place at full term between the 37th and 42nd week of pregnancy (see table 1b). 6.6% of babies were born prematurely, i.e. before the 37th week of pregnancy. This represents a slight decrease in the proportion of premature births compared with the previous year (2024: 6.8%). The highest figure for premature births to date was recorded in 2008 at 8.9%.

Multiple births remained rare in 2025. Only 2.8% of live births were twins or triplets. However, these births are associated with significantly increased risks. For instance, 53.4% of multiple births occurred before the 37th week of pregnancy, and in 53.3% of cases the birth weight was below 2 500 g. By comparison, preterm birth and low birth weight are significantly less common in singleton births: here the proportions were 5.2% and 4.3%, respectively.

Detailed results and further information on the medical and socio-medical characteristics of newborns can be found on our website.

Table 1a: Live births in 2025 by selected medical characteristics

Characteristics	Absolute	Percentage
Total live births[1] (absolute)	75 437	100.0
Place of delivery		
Hospital	74 317	98.5
Maternity home/midwifery practice	163	0.2
Mother's home	853	1.1
On transport	42	0.1
Other location	62	0.1
Mother's age at birth		
Under 20	780	1.0
20 to 24 years	7 055	9.4
25 to 29 years	20 058	26.6
30 to 34 years	27 880	37.0
35 to 39 years	15 883	21.1
40 to 44 years	3 495	4.6
45 years and over	286	0.4
Average age at childbirth (in years)	31.7	.
Average age at first birth (in years)	30.5	.
Mode of delivery		
Spontaneous delivery	44 858	59.5
Caesarean sections in total	24 748	32.8
primary (before labour begins, planned)	12 691	16.8
secondary (during labour, unplanned)	12 057	16.0
Vacuum extraction	5 812	7.7
Forceps delivery	11	0.0
Manual assistance	8	0.0

S: STATISTIK AUSTRIA, Vital Statistics.

1) Live births where the place of birth is within Austria and the mother's place of residence is in Austria.

Table 1b: Live births in 2025 by selected medical characteristics

Characteristics	Absolute	Percentage
Position of the child at birth		
Vertex presentation	67 439	89.4
Abnormal foetal presentation	3 909	5.2
Breech presentation	3 348	4.4
Transverse presentation	389	0.5
Unknown/cannot be determined	352	0.5
Gestational age[1]		
Less than 22+0	70	0.1
Preterm infants (22+0 to 36+6)[2]	4 946	6.6
Full-term infants (37+0 to 41+6)	70 235	93.1
Post-term infants (42+0 and over)	186	0.2
Average duration of pregnancy (in weeks)	39.3	.
Birth weight in grams		
Low birth weight (under 2 500 g)	4 284	5.7
Normal weight (2 500 to under 4 500 g)	70 484	93.4
Overweight (4 500 g and above)	669	0.9
Average birth weight – total	3 337	.
Boys	3 398	.
Girls	3 273	.
Height in cm		
Average body length – total	50.9	.
Boys	51.2	.
Girls	50.6	.

S: STATISTIK AUSTRIA, Vital Statistics.
1) Gestational age: expressed in completed weeks and days. – 2) Only live births from 22+0 weeks of gestation are included in the calculation of the preterm birth rate.

Table 2: Live births in 2025 by federal state and selected medical characteristics

Characteristics	Burgen-land	Carinthia	Lower Austria	Upper Upper	Salzburg burg	Styria mark	Tyrol	Vorarl-berg	Vienna
Total live births[1]	**1 766**	**4 099**	**12 984**	**13 134**	**4 946**	**9 625**	**6 463**	**3 567**	**18 853**
Hospital births as a percentage	98.0	96.8	97.8	98.6	99.0	98.8	99.0	98.4	99.0
Caesarean section rate in %	32.9	33.1	33.0	29.2	29.2	38.5	32.7	30.2	33.7
Preterm birth rate[2] in %	7.1	6.3	6.8	5.1	6.0	7.8	7.0	7.0	6.7
Underweight as a percentage	5.5	6.0	5.5	4.5	5.5	6.4	6.0	6.2	6.0
Average birth weight (in grams)	3 359	3 325	3 362	3 377	3 335	3 299	3 286	3 335	3 331
Average body length (in cm)	51.0	51.3	50.8	51.1	51.1	50.8	50.5	51.1	50.8

S: STATISTIK AUSTRIA, Vital Statistics.
1) Live births with a place of birth in Austria and the mother's place of residence in Austria. – 2) Only live births from 22+0 weeks of gestation are included in the calculation of the preterm birth rate.

Information on methodology, definitions:

The legal basis for birth statistics is the Civil Status Act (BGBl. No. 16/2013 as amended) and the Midwives Act (BGBl. No. 310/1994 as amended). These acts define the characteristics to be reported by midwives at births. With the establishment of a central civil status register (ZPR) as of 1 November 2014, a revision of the medical and socio-medical survey characteristics on the birth certificate took place.

Live birth: Regardless of the duration of pregnancy, a foetus is considered to be born alive if, after complete emergence from the mother's womb, either breathing begins or some other sign of life can be detected, such as heartbeat, pulsation of the umbilical cord or clear movement of voluntary muscles, regardless of whether the umbilical cord has been cut or not or whether the placenta has been expelled or not (definition according to the WHO guidelines).

Place of delivery: An institutional birth is a birth in a hospital. A birth can also take place in a maternity home or a midwifery practice. A home birth is a birth at the mother's place of residence. If the baby is born on the way to hospital, it is coded “at transport”.

Age at birth: Age of the mother in completed years at the time of birth. The average age of the mother is the arithmetic mean of the age of the women at the time of birth.

Length of pregnancy: in completed weeks plus days (the next week or part thereof). A gestation period of 22+0 to 36+6 is called preterm, 37+0 to 41+6 is called term birth, 42+0 and over is called transferred birth (definition according to WHO guidelines).

Birth position: The position of the child at birth refers to the relationship of the longitudinal axis of the child to the longitudinal axis of the mother or the uterus. A distinction is made between normal vertex position, abnormal vertex position, breech position, transverse position and unknown/not determinable.

Birth weight: Live births with a birth weight of 2 500 g to less than 4 500 g are considered normal weight; those with less than 2 500 g are considered underweight; values of 4 500 g or more are considered very high birth weight (definition according to WHO guidelines).

Statistics Austria is the central organisation for official data and statistics on society, the economy, the state and the environment. As a national statistical institute, it is committed to the statutory principles of independence, impartiality and objectivity. Statistics Austria is headed by Manuela Lenk, Director General Statistics, and Franz Haslauer, Director General Finance.

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