

YOUR BABY'S BIRTH CERTIFICATE

Why do we need birth certificates?

Your baby is going to need a birth certificate someday. In fact, the certificate might be useful sooner than you think. All of us are asked for legal proof of our age, parentage and citizenship at some time in our lives - when we enter kindergarten, play on a sports team, apply for a driver's license, a passport or Social Security, for example. Birth certificates are a legal record we can use for these things.

How will my baby get a birth certificate?

Please complete the *Mother's worksheet* as carefully as you can. This information will be used to create the birth record for your baby. Minnesota law requires that the birth record be filed within five days of your baby's birth.

You will be asked to provide information such as your age, birthplace, education, and mailing address.

Some hospitals give parents a souvenir birth certificate. This souvenir cannot be used for legal purposes and should not be confused with the birth record which is filed electronically with the Minnesota Department of Health.

Choosing your baby's name

- First, pick a first, middle and last name for your baby. These names may have up to 50 characters each.
- You may give your baby any name you choose. You can use either the father's or the mother's last name, both names with or without a hyphen in between, or a last name that is completely different from either parent's last name.
- Apostrophes and hyphens are the only non-letter characters that can be used on a birth certificate or Social Security Card. Names on birth certificates cannot contain accented characters, such as É, Ñ, or Ô. However, names can be pronounced as wished.
- Minnesota uses all capital letters to print on birth certificates. Names appear in all capital letters on Social Security cards and on Minnesota driver licenses and identity cards, too.

What information is on the birth certificate?

The birth record has two parts. One part is a legal record and includes information about the birth, the names of the parents and the child, birthdates of parents, and their birthplaces. For all births to married women, this part is a public record and prints on the birth certificate. Mothers who are not married may designate the birth as public if they wish.

The other part of the birth record contains private medical data; information about the pregnancy, the health of the mother and child, and the education of the parents. This information is used for statistical studies and to detect special health needs. It does not appear on the birth certificate. Health researchers depend on birth records to get data that is hard to get from other sources. Birth records are also an efficient way of locating mothers and newborns with health needs requiring special care. Detecting health needs early can mean healthier, happier mothers and babies.



How do I get a copy of a birth certificate?

After you have verified the birth record data, you may get a copy of a birth certificate from your county issuance office or apply to the Office of Vital Records at the Minnesota Department of Health. Birth certificates cost \$26.

Changing or correcting your baby's birth certificate

The hospital will print a verification copy of the birth record for you to review and make corrections before the record is filed. Please proofread the birth record carefully.

If you need to make a correction after the birth record has been filed, call the hospital or use the Parent Notice you will receive in the mail. You must make changes before a certificate is issued or within one year of the birth.

After one year or after a certificate is issued, amendments cost \$40 and you will need to complete an amendment form and provide proof that the change is justified and accurate. See the MDH website for more information about amendments at www.health.state.mn.us. Then click on Certificates & Records, and Changing a birth record.

Social Security Cards for babies

If you request it, the Minnesota Department of Health will electronically transmit birth information to the Social Security Administration (SSA) as a service to you, so they can send a free Social Security Number for your baby. Your baby must have a name, however. If your baby is un-named at the time of filing, or if the record is filed as "baby boy" or "baby girl," the Social Security Administration will not issue a Social Security Number, even if one is requested.

Birth record changes or corrections are not communicated to SSA. If you make any changes to your baby's name, you must contact the SSA to change the Social Security card. If you do not receive the Social Security card for any reason, contact SSA at 1-800-772-1213. Social Security cards cannot be forwarded or re-sent for any reason.

