

The crisis facing Black women giving birth

From the rich and famous to the less well-to-do, Black mothers are often not listened to when they report signs of possible complications of pregnancy and birth. Not only are their concerns dismissed, but traumatic birthing experiences are so common that one-quarter of Black women report [disrespect and abuse](#) from medical professionals in the hospital. Deaths and severe complications related to pregnancy and childbirth are the tip of the iceberg of medical harm experienced by Black birthing people, from rushed prenatal visits to unnecessary and unwanted cesarean births, which can cause postpartum infections and wound problems.

Childbirth is far more hazardous for Black women than white women. In New York state, the Department of Health found that three times more Black women died from pregnancy-related complications than white women, and this disparity persisted even when [college-educated Black women](#) were compared with non-Black women who did not finish high school. More than 60% of these deaths are preventable if appropriate care is given in a timely fashion.

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It's time for medical professionals and professional organizations to "re-educate themselves" to recognize and eliminate racism, patriarchy, and elitism in medicine so all women can experience safe and effective and respectful maternity care, and we can close the shameful disparity in maternal deaths.

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