Birth, marriage, death, disease, and accidents are among the vital statistics collected to help measure the health and well-being of the population. Marion County had 13,948 births in 1996, a change of -752 births from five years earlier in 1992 (-5.1 percent decrease). Of those live births, 2,147 were to teen mothers under age 20 — or 15.4 percent of all births in the county. Most births occurred to women between the ages of 20 to 29 (53.6 percent) and 30 to 39 (29.5 percent). There were 198 births to women age 40 and older in 1996, and 141 in 1992. The number of teen pregnancies in 1995 was 2,767, compared to 3,567 (17.6 percent) in 1990. There were 7,756 marriages in 1996, and 8,246 in 1990.

Among Marion County two-year old children in 1996, 612 percent had been fully immunized. Marion County had 7,646 deaths in 1996. Of those deaths, 2,294 (30.0 percent) were due to heart disease and 1,776 (23.2 percent) due to cancer. Motor vehicle accidents claimed 112 lives in 1996.

Sadly, in fiscal year 1997, 3,609 Marion County children were reported abused and 3,454 neglected; of those, 368 were substantiated as physical abuse, 592 as sexual abuse, and 987 as neglect. The percent of cases substantiated was 26.6 percent for abuse and 28.6 percent for neglect. The rate of abuse and neglect per 1,000 children under age 18 in Marion County was 9.6 in 1997, compared to 11.5 in 1996.

Births by Age of Mother

Questions to ponder...
Are low-cost health services such as immunization for children available to the working poor? What programs can help children and teens at risk? Are services available to help mothers of newborns? Do schools or other organizations provide education to children on drug and alcohol abuse? Is there a safety-net available to abuse victims?