

# HOUSING IS HEALTH

“Your zip code is a better predictor of your health than your genetic code.”

— Melody Goodman, assistant professor at Washington University

## HOUSING IMPACTS INFANT & MATERNAL HEALTH | DID YOU KNOW?

- There are three primary pathways by which housing directly influences infant and maternal health:
  1. Housing condition and habitability
  2. Neighborhood effect and access to resources
  3. Housing stability and affordability
- Racially segregated neighborhoods provide worse health outcomes for infants and mothers.
- There are four pathways that link individual-level stressors and preterm delivery in racially segregated neighborhoods:
  1. Adverse health behaviors (e.g. smoking, poor nutrition)
  2. Psychological factors (e.g. lack of social support, depression)
  3. Stress hormones (can initiate early labor)
  4. Depressed immune system (increased susceptibility to infection)
- Multiple moves preceding birth are associated with lower birth weight and poor maternal health.
- Housing challenges facing families with young children are most pronounced for lower income renter households.
  - A study assessing housing risks for lower income renters who were caregivers for young children found 86% of caregivers had experienced a form of housing deprivation and 34% had experienced serious housing instability, including being behind on rent, experiencing multiple housing moves, or experiencing homelessness. Households who had experienced these three forms of serious housing deprivation were more likely to experience poor caregiver health, maternal depressive symptoms, and poor child health.

### Sources:

- [More Than Shelter: Housing for Urban Maternal and Infant Health \(https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8037986/\)](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8037986/)
- [Housing may be key to high infant mortality numbers in Tennessee \(https://tennesseelookout.com/2021/05/04/housing-may-be-key-to-high-infant-mortality-numbers-in-tennessee/\)](https://tennesseelookout.com/2021/05/04/housing-may-be-key-to-high-infant-mortality-numbers-in-tennessee/)
- [A new approach to reduce infant mortality and achieve equity \(https://www.healthpolicyohio.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/SDOIM\\_ExecutiveSummary\\_posted.pdf\)](https://www.healthpolicyohio.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/SDOIM_ExecutiveSummary_posted.pdf)

**Where you live matters.** Housing and health are inextricably linked, so being able to choose the housing of your choice without barriers is critical. The Fair Housing Center for Rights & Research is a not for profit fair housing agency that promotes positive race relations and housing equality. If you think you have been discriminated against in housing related transactions because of your race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, familial status, or disability, contact The Fair Housing Center today. Our fair housing advocates can be reached by phone at **(216) 361-9240** or by email at **advocates@thehousingcenter.org**.



**Fair Housing Center**  
for Rights & Research



**CASE WESTERN RESERVE**  
**UNIVERSITY** EST. 1826

The Office of Interprofessional and  
Interdisciplinary Education and Research