

# Product of birth—head circumference, total centimetres NN[N].N

## Identifying and definitional attributes

<b>Metadata item type:</b>	Data Element
<b>Short name:</b>	Baby head circumference
<b>METEOR identifier:</b>	695727
<b>Registration status:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">Health</a>, Superseded 03/12/2020</li><li>• <a href="#">Tasmanian Health</a>, Standard 03/07/2020</li></ul>
<b>Definition:</b>	The head circumference of a baby at birth, measured in centimetres.
<b>Context:</b>	Perinatal
<b>Data Element Concept:</b>	<a href="#">Product of birth—head circumference</a>

## Value domain attributes

## Representational attributes

<b>Representation class:</b>	Total				
<b>Data type:</b>	Number				
<b>Format:</b>	NN[N].N				
<b>Maximum character length:</b>	4				
<b>Supplementary values:</b>	<table><thead><tr><th>Value</th><th>Meaning</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>999.9</td><td>Not measured</td></tr></tbody></table>	Value	Meaning	999.9	Not measured
Value	Meaning				
999.9	Not measured				
<b>Unit of measure:</b>	Centimetre (cm)				

## Data element attributes

## Collection and usage attributes

**Guide for use:**

This data element applies to newborn babies. It enables the calculation of growth centiles which requires the measurement of head circumference and birthweight and/or length. Baby head circumference together with other anthropometric measurements assist with determining whether a baby is small for gestational age or has experienced intrauterine growth restriction. In addition, head circumference measurement enables identification of newborns with microcephaly, either primary or as an association with other pathology, for example, Fetal Alcohol Syndrome.

Head circumference should preferably be measured in the first hour of life at the same time as the birthweight is measured, to maximise comparability of these two measures in percentile calculations. A narrow, flexible, inelastic tape measure with clearly legible intervals and labels should be used.

Ideally the circumference should be plotted on a percentile chart to ensure it is within the 10th–90th percentile curves and consistent with the length and weight percentile.

**Collection methods:**

The maximum head circumference should be recorded. Often after birth, the newborn's head has some moulding so care needs to be taken to find the maximum circumference. Generally this is found with the tape passing just above the eyebrows anteriorly, above the top of the ears and around the maximum point of the occiput posteriorly—the Occipito-Frontal Circumference (OFC).

The measurement should be repeated at least twice, and until two measurements are found within 0.5 cm of each other. Record the greater measurement.

## Source and reference attributes

**Submitting organisation:** National Perinatal Data Development Committee

## Relational attributes

**Related metadata references:**

Supersedes [Birth—head circumference, total centimetres NN\[N\].N](#)

- [Health](#), Superseded 12/12/2018
- [Tasmanian Health](#), Superseded 03/07/2020

Has been superseded by [Product of birth—head circumference, total centimetres NN\[N\].N](#)

- [Health](#), Standard 03/12/2020

**Implementation in Data Set Specifications:**

[Perinatal NBEDS 2019–20 Health](#), Superseded 20/11/2019

**Implementation start date:** 01/07/2019

**Implementation end date:** 30/06/2020

**DSS specific information:**

Baby head circumference can be recorded as measured e.g. 35.1 cm or can be rounded to the nearest 0.5 cm, e.g. 35.0 cm, but in any case measurement should be recorded at least to the nearest 0.5 cm.

If rounding, round up or down to the nearest 0.5 cm, e.g. 35.2 cm would be rounded down to 35.0 cm; 35.3 cm would be rounded up to 35.5 cm.

Example:

A baby has two head circumference measurements taken at birth of 34.2 cm and 34.6 cm. These are within 0.5 cm of each other so the higher measurement of 34.6 cm is the correct one to record. It can be recorded as 34.6 cm or rounded to the nearest 0.5 cm, that is, 34.5 cm.

[Perinatal NBEDS 2020–21 Health](#), Superseded 03/12/2020

**Implementation start date:** 01/07/2020

**Implementation end date:** 30/06/2021

**DSS specific information:**

Baby head circumference can be recorded as measured e.g. 35.1 cm or can be rounded to the nearest 0.5 cm, e.g. 35.0 cm, but in any case measurement should be recorded at least to the nearest 0.5 cm.

If rounding, round up or down to the nearest 0.5 cm, e.g. 35.2 cm would be rounded down to 35.0 cm; 35.3 cm would be rounded up to 35.5 cm.

Example:

A baby has two head circumference measurements taken at birth of 34.2 cm and 34.6 cm. These are within 0.5 cm of each other so the higher measurement of 34.6 cm is the correct one to record. It can be recorded as 34.6 cm or rounded to the nearest 0.5 cm, that is, 34.5 cm.

© Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2015–2022

This product, excluding the AIHW logo, Commonwealth Coat of Arms and any material owned by a third party or protected by a trademark, has been released under a Creative Commons BY 3.0 (CC BY 3.0) licence. Excluded material owned by third parties may include, for example, design and layout, images obtained under licence from third parties and signatures. We have made all reasonable efforts to identify and label material owned by third parties.

You may distribute, remix and build upon this work. However, you must attribute the AIHW as the copyright holder of the work in compliance with our attribution policy available at [www.aihw.gov.au/copyright](http://www.aihw.gov.au/copyright). The full terms and conditions of this licence are available at <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by3.0/au/>.

Enquiries relating to copyright should be addressed to the Head of the Communications, Media and Marketing Unit, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, GPO Box 570, Canberra ACT 2601.