

Beat: Health

## 9-year-old girl in western Mexico gives birth

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**USPA News** - A 9-year-old girl in Mexico's western state of Jalisco has given birth to a baby girl after a pregnancy of more than seven months, police and prosecutors said on Wednesday, making her one of the youngest mothers in confirmed medical history. The young girl gave birth on January 27 at Occidente General Hospital in Zapopan, a city which is part of the Guadalajara metropolitan area in Jalisco.

She was brought to the hospital earlier in the day after hiding the pregnancy for more than seven months, and doctors recommended carrying out a caesarean section. Prosecutors said the baby girl weighed 2.7 kilograms (5.7 pounds) and measured 50 centimeters (20 inches) when she was born last month. The mother and her daughter, whose names have been withheld from this report because of their ages and the circumstances, were both released last weekend in good condition. Enrique Rabago Solorio, director of Occidente General Hospital, said the young mother received counseling before and after the birth. "At this age the body is not ready and in the position to give birth, so the baby was born via caesarean section," he said during a news conference on Wednesday. The girl became pregnant when she was just 8 years old and said a 17-year-old boy, who she described as her "boyfriend", was the father. Jalisco state police said they had launched an investigation to find the suspected father, who previously left the state to find work after the girl's family denied his request to live with her. The teenager could face a number of charges depending on whether the case is classified as rape, child sexual abuse, or corruption of a minor, according to prosecutors. The minimum age of consent varies across Mexico but is 12 in the state of Jalisco, which is in line with the country's federal law. Authorities said the young girl is from a large family and lives with her mother in Ixtlahuacán de los Membrillos, a poor town about 45 kilometers (28 miles) southeast of Zapopan. Her parents have eleven children but are divorced, making it difficult for the mother to care for them. Figures from the country's health ministry suggest more than 480,000 girls between the ages of 14 and 18 give birth in Mexico each year, but mothers aged 12 and younger are extremely rare. In October 2011, a 10-year-old girl from the San Francisco Totimehuacan community near the city of Puebla, the capital of the state which carries the same name, gave birth to a baby boy. She and her sister had been repeatedly raped by their stepfather and the pregnant girl was unable to have an abortion due to state laws. And in August 2010, an eleven-year old Mayan girl named Amalia gave birth in southern Mexico, two weeks earlier than expected. The birth came months after state's attorney-general office had denied an abortion to the girl because she was in the fourth month of pregnancy. The case of Amalia generated national media interest due to her age and the fact she was denied an abortion, despite having been repeatedly raped by her stepfather when she was 10 years old. Local laws in the state where she was born do not allow abortions after the third month of pregnancy. Amalia's case was reminiscent to that of then 13-year-old Paulina Ramirez Jacinto, who was raped in 1999 by a drug addict who broke into her house while she was sleeping. Paulina and her family began and subsequently won legal procedures in the state of Baja California to have an abortion. But Paulina was unable to have the abortion because the hospital refused to carry out the medical procedure. Instead, the girl was sent to religious and anti-abortion groups which convinced the child to give birth. Years later, in 2005, the Interamerican Human Rights Commission (CIDH) ordered the state to pay compensation to Paulina and to pay alimony to her son until he reaches legal age. Worldwide, the youngest mother in confirmed medical history is Lina Medina who gave birth in Peru in 1939 at the tender age of just 5. Her father was initially arrested on suspicion of having sex with Medina but was later released due to a lack of evidence, and the mother never revealed who is the father.

**Article online:**

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