The Vow Factor: Marriage, Divorce, and Family Formation and their Impact on Health and Well-being

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What have been the major trends in marriage, cohabitation, and non-marital childbearing in the U.S.?
Let us see:

*Slides courtesy of Wendy Manning, Distinguished Professor, Bowling Green State University.*
Family Change:
Age at Marriage 1890-2013

Median Age at 1st Marriage by Sex, 1890-2013

Source: National Center for Health Statistics
Family Change:
Unmarried Births 1960-2012

Source: National Center for Health Statistics
Family Change:
Marital Status: 1970-2012

Figure 1. Marital Status of U.S. Population Aged 15 and Older, 1970-2012

- Married
- Never Married
- Divorced
- Widowed
Family Change: Cohabitation 1987-2010

Figure 1. Two Decades of Trends in Percentage of Women (ages 19-44) Ever Cohabited by Age

Sources: Bumpass and Sweet, 1989; Bumpass and Lu, 2000; Kennedy and Bumpass, 2008
Federal agencies support many important surveys with information on marriage, cohabitation, and divorce, including:

- **Census Bureau**, (American Community Survey questions on marital history)
- **National Science Foundation** (Panel Study of Income Dynamics)
- **Bureau of Labor Statistics** (National Longitudinal Study of Youth)
- **National Center for Health Statistics** (National Survey of Family Growth)
- **National Institutes of Health:**
  - Health and Retirement Survey
  - Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study (NIH)