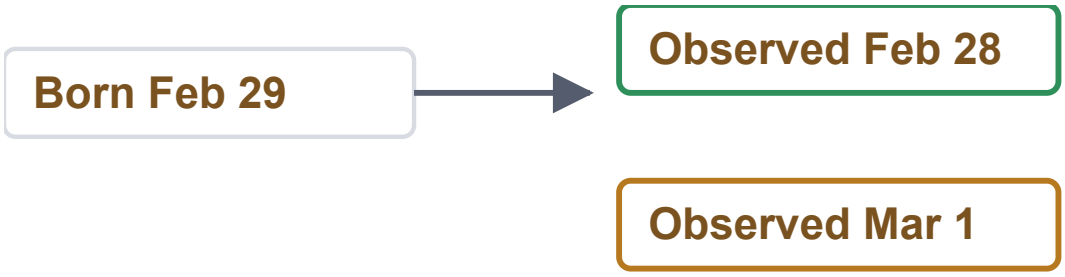
How a Leap-Day Birthday Is Handled in a Non-Leap Year

> Someone born on February 29 has no real birthday in three out of every four years, so any age or anniversary calculation has to pick an observed date instead.

A person born on a leap day has a real birth date that simply does not exist in a non-leap year. Since a birthday, anniversary, or recurring annual event tied to that date still needs to be recognized every year, some observed-date convention is required, whether that's treating February 28 as the observed date, treating March 1 as the observed date, or (less commonly) skipping recognition entirely until the next leap year. Different systems make different choices here.



In a non-leap year, both are defensible observed dates for the same underlying leap

A February 29 birthday needs an explicit observed-date rule for the three out of four years that have no February 29.

Why there is no single "correct" observed date

Both February 28 (the last day of February) and March 1 (the day immediately following where February 29 would have been) are internally consistent choices, and different jurisdictions, institutions, and individuals genuinely use both. Neither is dictated by the calendar itself. The calendar simply does not define February 29 in a non-leap year, leaving the observed-date choice open.

How this interacts with calendar age

Once an observed date is chosen, calendar age for a leap-day-born person advances on that observed date in a non-leap year exactly as it would on a real birthday, and reverts to the actual February 29 in the next leap year. This means a leap-day-born person's calendar age calculation depends on the same observed-date convention as their recognized birthday, not a separate rule.

What WhenMath's life-date engines do

The Milestone Birthday Planner and Relationship / Event Anniversary Calculator both accept an explicit February 28-or-March 1 observed-date setting for a leap-day anniversary, rather than silently picking one, since the correct choice depends on the specific person, institution, or jurisdiction's own convention rather than a universal rule.

Key takeaway. A February 29 birthday has no real occurrence in a non-leap year and needs an explicit observed-date rule (February 28 or March 1). Confirm which convention applies rather than assuming one.

Frequently asked

Does this affect the Half / Double Age Date Calculator?

Only when the target half or double age itself would fall on a February 29 in a non-leap target year. The calculator applies the same explicit observed-date setting in that specific case.

Is there a legal standard for which observed date to use?

WhenMath does not make legal determinations. Some jurisdictions have specific statutory rules for leap-day birthdays (for age-of-majority purposes, for instance), which should be confirmed with a qualified source rather than assumed from either convention.

How often does the "real" February 29 birthday actually occur?

Once every four years in most cases, following the same Gregorian leap-year rule covered in the leap-year resource above, including its century-year exceptions.

WhenMath is a browser-local calculation tool, not a legal, payroll, or scheduling authority. This guide explains a calculation convention; it is educational, not a determination that any specific contract, employer, or jurisdiction follows it.