

Infant Mortality



Risk Factors

- **Maternal age**
Infant mortality rates are highest among births to individuals <20 and >40.
- **Race/ethnicity**
Infants born to Black and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander women have twice the risk of infant mortality compared to those born to White women.
- **Smoking during pregnancy**
Sudden unexpected infant death more than doubles with any maternal smoking during pregnancy.
- **Poor nutrition**
Maternal malnutrition is a key contributor to infant morbidity and mortality.
- **Alcohol use**
- **Maternal pregnancy complications**
Women with hypertension are at a higher risk for poor birth outcomes, including infant death.
- **Plural/multiple births**
Infant mortality rate increases with multiple births.

Infant mortality is defined as the death of a baby before his or her first birthday. It is often used as an overall indicator of health status of a society, as well as maternal and infant health.

Some of the leading causes of infant death include:

- Congenital malformations
- Low birth weight
- Sudden infant death syndrome
- Unintentional injuries
- Maternal complications

Facts

- In 2019, there were 20,927 infant deaths in the United States.
- In 2019, the infant mortality rate in the United States was 5.58 deaths per 1,000 live births.
- In 2017-2019, the infant mortality rate in San Diego County was 3.88 deaths per 1,000 live births.

Resources

County of San Diego: Maternal, Child, and Family Health Services
www.sdmcfhs.org

American Sudden Infant Death Institute
www.sids.org

For more information and data go to

www.SDHealthStatistics.com

Community Health Statistics Unit:
619-692-6667

Prevention

- **Seek pre-pregnancy and prenatal care**
Reaching a healthy weight and managing health conditions can help a woman achieve better health before getting pregnant.
- **Avoid use of alcohol, tobacco, and drugs**
Substance use can increase the risk for birth defects.
- **Create a safe infant sleep environment**
Always place a baby on their back to sleep and keep the sleep area cleared.
- **Use newborn screening to detect unnoticeable conditions**

