

# Infant Mortality



## Risk Factors:

- **Age**

Births to women less than 16 years of age or to women aged 44 years and older have a higher risk of infant mortality.

- **Race/Ethnicity**

African Americans have the highest infant mortality rate in the nation.

- **Low Birth Weight**

- **Plural/Multiple Births**

- **Smoking during pregnancy**

- **Lack of Prenatal Care**

- **Poor Nutrition**

- **Alcohol and drug use**

- **Maternal Education**

Lower maternal education is associated with higher rates of infant mortality.

- **Marital Status**

Infants of non-married mothers have higher risk of poor outcomes.

Infant mortality is defined as the death of a baby less than one year of age.

It is often used as an indicator of the health of a nation.

Nearly half of all infant deaths are caused by congenital malformations, low birth weight, and sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).

## Facts

- In 2009, more than 26,000 infants died before the age of one year in the United States.
- The national infant mortality rate was 6.39 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2009.
- The U.S. ranked 30th in the world for infant mortality in 2005.
- In San Diego County, the infant mortality rate was 4.4 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2009.

For more information and data go to  
[www.SDHealthStatistics.com](http://www.SDHealthStatistics.com)

Community Health Statistics Unit:  
619-285-6479

## Prevention

- Avoid smoking during pregnancy.
- Do not use alcohol and drugs during pregnancy.
- Seek prenatal care.
- Maintain a healthy diet during pregnancy.
- Always place sleeping infants on their backs to reduce the risk of sudden infant death syndrome.



## Resources

**County of San Diego:  
Maternal, Child, and Family  
Health Services**

[www.sdmcfhs.org](http://www.sdmcfhs.org)

**American Sudden Infant Death  
Institute**

[www.sids.org](http://www.sids.org)