

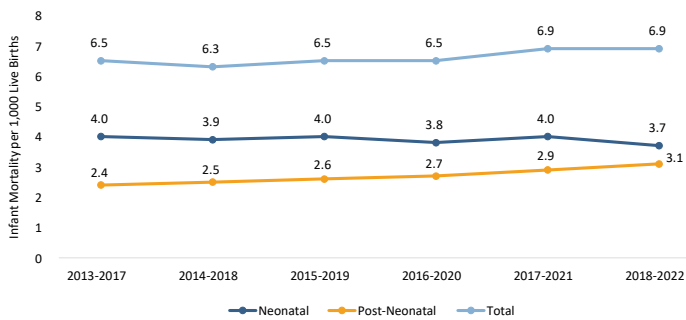
INFANT MORTALITY

in South Dakota



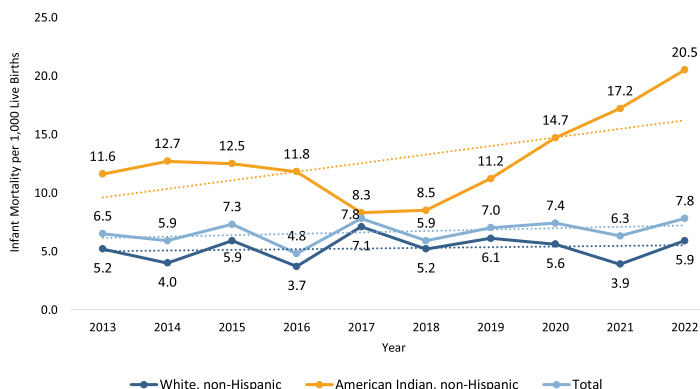
Infant mortality is the death of an infant before their first birthday. The infant mortality rate is the number of infant deaths for every 1,000 live births. In addition to giving us key information about maternal and infant health, the infant mortality rate is an important marker of the overall health of a society. In 2021, the infant mortality rate in the United States was 5.4 deaths per 1,000 live births.¹ In South Dakota, the infant mortality rate was 6.3 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2021.

NEONATAL, POST-NEONATAL, AND TOTAL INFANT MORTALITY RATES, 5-YEAR AVERAGES, SOUTH DAKOTA, 2013-2022



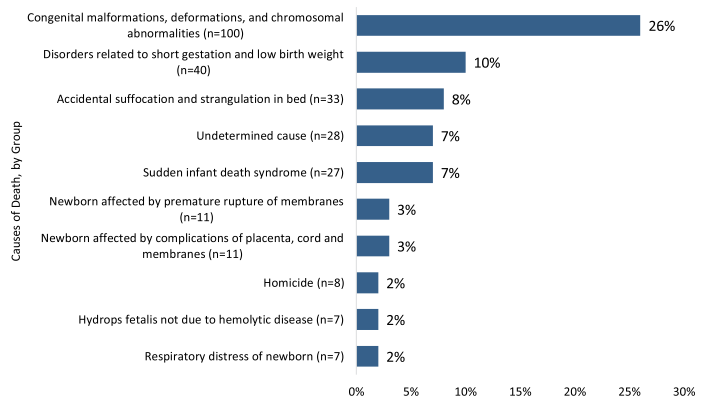
- Five-year average infant mortality rates show that overall rates have remained steady over the past decade but have increased in recent years.
- Neonatal deaths (occurring in infants aged 0-27 days) have remained steady since the 2013-2017 years, with a slight decrease in recent years from 4.0 to 3.7, and the post-neonatal deaths (28-364 days) have been steadily increasing since 2013. The current five-year average of 3.1 for post-neonatal deaths is the highest it has been since the 2004-2008 time period.

INFANT MORTALITY RATES BY RACE, SOUTH DAKOTA, 2013-2022



- Rates for other races were extremely unstable due to very small numbers, and therefore have not been presented.
- Overall trends in American Indian infant deaths have shown increasing rates over the past decade with the American Indian infant mortality rate being 3.5 times higher than the White infant mortality rate for 2022.
- In 2023 the Office of Child and Family Services created the Mortality Prevention Workgroup. The workgroup includes members of the Child Death Review Committees, the Maternal Mortality Review Committee, and other stakeholders with an interest in improving the outcomes for all mothers and infants in South Dakota.

LEADING CAUSES OF DEATH AMONG RESIDENT INFANTS, SOUTH DAKOTA, 2018-2022



- An average of 78 infants died each year before their first birthday in South Dakota from 2018 to 2022.
- Congenital malformations, deformations, chromosomal abnormalities, and disorders related to short gestation and low birth weight were the top two causes of infant deaths in South Dakota from 2018 to 2022, accounting for 140 infant deaths.



DATA SOURCE: Birth and Death records. Office of Health Statistics, SD Department of Health

REFERENCE: 1. Xu JQ, Murphy SL, Kochanek KD, Arias E. Mortality in the United States, 2021. NCHS Data Brief, no 456. Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics. 2022. DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.15620/cdc.122516>

Reducing INFANT MORTALITY in South Dakota

The Office of Child and Family Services (OCFS) is the outreach arm of the South Dakota Department of Health. OCFS staff work to build equitable systems of care and provide direct family health services to thousands of South Dakota families. The OCFS puts a specific emphasis on improving maternal and infant health outcomes including infant mortality. Prevention efforts focus on two areas - maternal health (impacting deaths from the perinatal period and congenital anomalies) and infant safe sleep (impacting sleep-related deaths).

MATERNAL HEALTH

(Perinatal period conditions and congenital anomalies)

The Office of Child and Family Services supports women's health across the lifespan including promotion of healthy lifestyle choices to support healthy pregnancies. Maternal health is closely linked to infant health outcomes.

- + **Bright Start Nurse Visiting:** supports expectant, first-time moms by connecting them with a free personal nurse to walk alongside them every step of their pregnancy and help them prepare for childbirth and parenting.
- + **Pregnancy Care Program:** Provides risk assessment of pregnant women; monthly visits with a nurse during pregnancy and visits throughout the postpartum period; and education throughout the perinatal period to support a healthy pregnancy and healthy baby.

- + **Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC):** A nutrition and breastfeeding education and counseling program that helps to improve healthy lifestyle choices and promote sound food buying habits. It also provides referrals to community agencies, social programs, and preventative health.
- + **OCFS was awarded the Enhancing Reviews and Surveillance to Eliminate Maternal Mortality (ERASE MM) grant** through the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The grant will continue to support the work of the Maternal Mortality Review Committee, as well as assist OCFS in implementing programs to prevent future maternal mortality.

SLEEP-RELATED DEATHS

From 2018-2022, the statewide Child Death Review (CDR) found that 25% of infant deaths were related to sleep or an unsafe sleep environment (such as an adult bed, couch, chair, car seat, swing, rock 'n play, or unsafe crib). Sixty-six percent (66%) of these sleep-related deaths occurred while a baby was sharing a sleep surface (such as an adult bed, futon, couch, or chair) with an adult and/or child. CDR teams determined that **84% of these sleep-related deaths were potentially preventable.**

The OCFS provides these programs and services related to safe sleep:

- + **Distributes over 1,000 safe sleep kits (includes a Pack 'n Play)** through DOH Community Health Offices and community partners to families in need of a safe place for baby to sleep. This is made possible through a public private partnership with the National Cribs for Kids Program.
- + **Infant Safe Sleep Workgroup:** focuses on evidence-based strategies to increase safe sleep practices for infants. This collaborative group has representatives from Avera Hospital System, Sanford Hospital System, DSS Childcare Services, SDSU Extension-Early Childhood, DOH Community Health Services, Lach's Legacy Foundation, and the Avera Research Institute on the Pine Ridge reservation.

- + **Educates families about safe sleep through an infographic (handout)** that is dispersed to newborn families at birthing hospitals across the state; social media including the For Baby's Sake webpage and Facebook page; and posts on the DOH Facebook page.
- + **Works with birthing hospitals throughout the state to promote Safe Sleep** certification across their systems. This ensures that hospital policies and staff messaging are consistent with evidence-based safe sleep practices.
- + **Educates families of newborns on safe sleep practices** by including the Sleep Baby Safe and Snug book in the governor's Strong Families mailings.
- + **Provides infant safe sleep education to all families in OCFS programs** - WIC, Bright Start Nurse Visiting, and Community Health.
- + **OCFS was awarded a second CDC grant, the Sudden Unexpected Infant Death (SUID) Case Registry.** Outcomes with this grant will include increased access to high-quality data for SUID with information on disparities and social determinants of health and increased implementation of community and data driven prevention strategies to reduce the risk factors for infant death.