



Infant Mortality Factsheet

What is Infant Death?

- The death of a child under one year of age.
- The infant mortality rate (IMR) is the number of deaths for babies under one year of age in a given year for every 1,000 live births in the same year. It is one of the key measures of the health and wellbeing of a community, state, or country.
- The top leading causes of death among babies in this age group include:
 - ◆ congenital abnormalities (conditions present at birth as a result of genetic, environmental influences, or unknown causes)
 - ◆ pre-term birth
 - ◆ low birth weight
 - ◆ Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)
 - ◆ problems related to pregnancy complications.

Infant Death in Kansas

- Although Kansas' low birth weight and prematurity rates have been *better* than the US rates, the state's infant mortality rate has been *losing ground* compared to the national average. In 2009, Kansas' rate (7.01) was 9 percent higher than the US rate (6.42, preliminary).
- In the latest national report, 2007 final data, Kansas ranked worst in the nation for black infant mortality.
- In 2009, infant mortality among non-Hispanic black infants was more than double that of the rate among non-Hispanic white infants. Non-Hispanic black babies represented 7 percent of births and 15 percent of deaths.

- Based on the 2005-2009 combined data, across all races and ethnicities, Kansas IMRs were higher for each of these populations:
 - ◆ younger mothers/under 20
 - ◆ without a high school education
 - ◆ unmarried
 - ◆ no prenatal care

What Causes Infant Death?

The social conditions in which we are born, live, and work deeply affect our health and longevity. Studies have found there are many factors that affect health outcomes:

- employment, and economic security
- education
- environmental quality (air, water, etc.)
- health care access
- community safety and security
- social support (connection to family, friends, community)
- maternal nutrition
- stress, racism, etc

No one factor can be singled out as the cause of infant death. Research on infant death suggests these same factors play a role in the health of mothers and their babies in regards to infant death.

Want More Information?

Contact the Kansas Blue Ribbon Panel on Infant Mortality:

www.kansasinfantmortality.org

References

Kansas Department of Health and Environment, "Kansas Annual Summary of Vital Statistics, 2009"

National Center for Health Statistics, "Deaths: Final data for 2007."