



## What Can We Do To Reduce Risks for Infant Deaths?



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The National Healthy Start Association sponsors the month of September as National Infant Mortality Awareness Month. The campaign theme is “Celebrate Day 366 - Every baby deserves a chance.”

Every baby deserves a chance and it is a year-round effort that affects all of us in our communities. You know best what conditions exist in your community that are positive and negative influences on the health of mothers and their babies. Some issues, such as hunger and poor nutrition (leading to overweight or underweight) may not be obvious at first glance but can be addressed early with available resources.

While there is no one solution to reduce or prevent infant death, we can make a point to share information so more people know what can be done to reduce risks for infant death. Please reach out and:

- Encourage a young woman you may know to get early prenatal care, to keep her appointments, and make choices for a healthy pregnancy.
- Know where your local health department is. The health department may provide services during and after pregnancy free-of-charge and/or on a sliding-fee scale. Know where your federally qualified (FQHC) community health center is that offers primary care to uninsured and under-insured patients.
- Encourage fathers to be involved if possible.

- Reduce the risks for Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) by practicing the “ABCs” of safe sleep: Alone, on their Back, and in a Crib [www.sidsks.org](http://www.sidsks.org)
- While prematurity (birth of a baby after 20 weeks but before 37 weeks) cannot always be prevented, some things can be done to reduce risks for premature birth:
  - ◆ Taking a daily prenatal vitamin with folic acid
  - ◆ Getting early prenatal care
  - ◆ Quitting or cutting back tobacco use (KanQuit—1-800-QUIT-NOW or 1-800-784-8669)
  - ◆ Quitting alcohol or drug use
  - ◆ Knowing early signs of pre-term labor <http://marchofdimes.com/pregnancy/preterm-labor-signs.html>

### Every baby deserves a chance . . .

Everyone—families, health providers, community organizations, state agencies, insurance providers, and many others must work together and coordinate efforts to solve this problem in Kansas.

Help your community to come up with solutions that best fit the needs of young parents and parents-to-be who live there.

Advocate for expanded education for all women that occurs before pregnancy, during, and after in order to assure the best health outcomes for mother and child.

Review the Kansas Blue Ribbon Panel recommendations which suggest further actions to reduce and prevent infant death: [www.kansasinfantmortality.org](http://www.kansasinfantmortality.org)