

Priority Area – Maternal and Infant Mortality

Improving the well-being of mothers, infants, and children is an important public health goal for the United States. Their well-being determines the health of the next generation and can help predict future public health challenges for families, communities, and the health care system. The objectives of the Maternal, Infant, and Child Health topic area address a wide range of conditions, health behaviors, and health systems indicators that affect the health, wellness, and quality of life of women, children, and families.



FIMR photo

What is maternal mortality?

Women with long-lasting health conditions are more likely to have problems around the time they give birth or in the period after giving birth. The rate of pregnancy-related deaths in the U.S. has more than doubled since 1987. It is more and more common for women to have conditions like:

- High blood pressure
- Diabetes
- Heart disease
- Obesity

Non-Hispanic Black and American Indian/Alaskan Native women are more likely to die from pregnancy related causes than non-Hispanic White women. ([HRSA](#))

What is infant mortality?

Infant mortality is the death of a live-born baby before his or her first birthday. Every year in the U.S., about 23,000 babies who are born alive do not survive to their first birthday. An almost equal number of babies are stillborn, without signs of life. While fetal and infant mortality in the United States has improved, disparities persist between whites and persons of color, especially African Americans, Latinos and Native Americans ([FIMR](#)).

- The infant mortality rate is the number of infant deaths for every 1,000 live births.
- This is an important marker of the overall health of a society.
- In 2019, the infant mortality rate in [Florida](#) was 6.0; in 2018 in the U.S. it was 5.7 deaths per 1,000 live births. (See [Mortality in the United States, 2018](#)).
- Over 21,000 infants died in the U.S. in 2018
- Five leading causes:
 - [Birth defects](#)
 - [Preterm birth](#) and low birth weight
 - Maternal [pregnancy complications](#)
 - [Sudden infant death syndrome](#)
 - [Injuries](#) (e.g., suffocation).

Prevention and Management

5 ways to help reduce risk (NIH, [National Child Health and Human Development](#))

- [Preventing Birth Defects](#)
- [Addressing Preterm Birth, Low Birth Weight and Their Outcomes](#)
- [Getting Pre-Pregnancy and Prenatal Care](#)
- [Creating a Safe Infant Sleep Environment](#)
- [Using Newborn Screening to Detect Hidden Conditions](#)

Resources

- [National Fetal Infant Mortality Review Program \(NFIMR\)](#)
- [National Center for Fatality Review and Prevention \(CRFP\)](#)
- [Infant Mortality and African Americans](#)
- [Safe Infant Sleep and Breastfeeding](#) video, also in [Spanish](#)
- CDC [Maternal and infant Mortality](#)