



## Infant Mortality Data

### What is infant mortality?

Infant mortality is defined as the death of a baby that is less than one year old. Infant deaths are typically classified as neonatal or postneonatal. Neonatal deaths are those to infants who die before 28 complete days of life; postneonatal deaths are defined as deaths to infants at least 28 days but less than 365 days old.

### How does Oklahoma compare to the rest of the United States regarding infant mortality rates?

One of the factors in considering a nation's health status compared to other countries is its infant mortality rate (IMR), which is the number of infant deaths per 1,000 live births.

The United States ranks 31<sup>st</sup> among the 34 industrialized countries in infant mortality.

*Source: Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). OECD Health Statistics 2014 – Year 2012*

In 2013, Oklahoma ranked 39<sup>th</sup> in the United States with an IMR of 6.8, according to the National Center for Health Statistics. Oklahoma's IMR has consistently remained above the national rate since 1992. While viewed cautiously, the state's IMR of 6.8 infant deaths per 1,000 live births for 2013 reflects a sharp decline of 9% and the lowest rate on record for Oklahoma infant deaths.

### How does Oklahoma compare to surrounding states?

Chart 1: National IMR Rankings

2013 National Ranking	State	IMR
–	US Average	5.96
1	Iowa	4.14
12	Colorado	5.09
17	New Mexico	5.46
22	Texas	5.84
30	Kansas	6.44
32	Missouri	6.52
39	Oklahoma	6.82
48	Arkansas	7.61
50	Louisiana	8.64
51	Mississippi	9.65

*Source:*

*Deaths: Final data for 2013. National vital statistics reports; vol 64 no 2. Hyattsville, Maryland: National Center for Health Statistics. 2015*

## What causes infant mortality?

The top three rankable causes of infant death in Oklahoma are:

- congenital malformations (medical condition present at birth)
- disorders related to short gestation (less than 37 weeks of completed pregnancy) and low birth weight (less than five pounds, eight ounces)
- Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)

*NOTE: The leading cause of infant death for whites, American Indian/Alaska Natives, Asian/Pacific Islanders, and Hispanics is “congenital malformations” while the leading cause of infant death for African Americans is “disorders due to short gestation and low birth weight.”*

## Are there racial and ethnic disparities in IMR in Oklahoma?

Yes. The following shows IMR by race and ethnicity of the mother from 2011-2013.

Chart 2: Oklahoma IMR by Race, Ethnicity (2011-2013)

Statewide	7.6
Race/Ethnicity	
White	6.1
African American	15.4
American Indian/Alaska Native	8.1
Asian/Pacific Islander	5.9
*Hispanic	7.3

*\*Persons of Hispanic origin can be of any race and are mutually exclusive from the other race categories*

*Source: Oklahoma State Department of Health, Center for Health Statistics, Health Care Information, Vital Statistics 2011-2013, Oklahoma Statistics on Health Available for Everyone (OK2SHARE). Accessed at <http://www.health.ok.gov/OK2SHARE> on 1 Apr 2015.*

## What can I do to prevent infant mortality in Oklahoma?

**There are many things that everyone can do to help ensure Oklahoma’s babies are safe and healthy. Some are:**

- Being healthy before and between pregnancies greatly improves the chances of having a healthy baby
- Having a full-term pregnancy (about 40 weeks) contributes to good birth outcomes
- Breastfeeding offers a baby the best nutrition for every stage of growth
- Getting tested and treated, if needed, for sexually transmitted diseases promotes a healthy pregnancy and birth
- Placing baby on his or her back to sleep decreases the chances of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome
- Avoiding exposure to secondhand smoke contributes to strong and healthy babies
- Preventing injuries among infants will keep them safe and secure
- Recognizing the signs and getting help for postpartum depression can improve health for both mother and baby



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