

Infant Mortality

DEFINITION

This indicator reports deaths occurring to infants under one year of age, per 1,000 live births, between 2004 and 2008.

CONTEXT

Over the last fifty years, infant mortality has declined dramatically in the United States from 26 deaths per 1,000 live births in 1960 to 6.7 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2006. But the rate of decline has slowed in recent years, and many countries achieve more favorable rates than the United States. Indeed, in 2004, the U.S. ranked 29th among countries on its infant mortality rate (Anne E. Casey 2009).

Infant mortality rates vary significantly by race in the United States, with 13.5 deaths per 1,000 births for non-Hispanic blacks versus rates of 5.7 for non-Hispanic whites and 5.5 for Hispanics (Kaiser Family Foundation 2010).

Health professionals take various approaches to reducing infant mortality. Some approaches address general maternal health such as efforts to reduce obesity, diabetes and smoking. Others emphasize health education, prenatal counseling and prenatal care. Still others are more specific, concentrating on reducing the incidence of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), which is the leading cause of death for babies from one to 12 months of age (Anne E. Casey 2009).

Infant Mortality Rate By County, 2004-2008

	Live births	Infant deaths	Rate per 1,000	95% lower limit	95% upper limit
STATE TOTAL	71,018	372	5.2	4.7	5.8
Belknap County	2,997	9	3	1.5	5.5
Carroll County	1,972	11	5.6	2.9	9.7
Cheshire County	3,733	23	6.2	4	9.1
Coos County	1,484	8	5.4	2.5	10.2
Grafton County	4,118	25	6.1	4	8.8
Hillsborough County	24,586	121	4.9	4.1	5.9
Merrimack County	7,694	47	6.1	4.5	8.1
Rockingham County	15,190	73	4.8	3.8	6
Strafford County	6,875	45	6.5	4.8	8.7
Sullivan County	2,369	10	4.2	2.2	7.5

NEW HAMPSHIRE FINDINGS

During the period 2004 to 2008, New Hampshire's infant mortality rate was 5.2, with the rate varying greatly by county. Belknap, Hillsborough, Rockingham and Sullivan Counties all had rates below 5, while Cheshire, Grafton, Merrimack, and Strafford had rates above 6 per 1,000 live births. For the smaller counties, however, accurate figures are difficult to determine. For instance, the best estimate of the Belknap County infant mortality rate is 3, however it would be more accurate to state that the true rate is between 1.5 and 5.5. (see chart on previous page)

In 2007, New Hampshire's infant mortality rate of 5.4 placed it 44th among the states, with Washington, Massachusetts, Utah, Vermont, New Jersey and California achieving lower infant mortality rates than New Hampshire. Since 1998, New Hampshire's infant mortality rate has consistently been lower than the U.S. rate, with the lowest rate at 4 deaths per 1,000 live births and the high rate at 6 deaths per 1,000 live births (University of New Hampshire, Carsey Institute 2010).

SOURCE OF DATA FOR ILLUSTRATION/METHODOLOGY

New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services (NH DHHS), Bureau of Public Health Statistics and Informatics (BPHSI), Health Statistics and Data Management Section (HSDM), and New Hampshire Department of State, Division of Vital Records Administration, 2004-2008.

REFERENCES

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