Despite Drop in Infant Mortality, Black Babies Still Likelier to Die

African-American children are twice as likely as white tots to die before their first birthday.

June 30, 2020 By Alicia Green

A new report by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reveals that fewer newborns are dying in the United States. But the news is not all good. The findings also showed that Black infants risk for death is twice that of white babies, CNN reports.

Defined as the death of an infant before their first birthday, infant mortality decreased among mothers in all age groups between 2000 and 2017. Researchers attributed this finding to changes in the age of women giving birth, which accounted for nearly one third of the decline.

While mortality rates dipped by 8% to 9% for babies born to women under age 29, the rates declined even more for individuals ages 30 to 39 (16%) and dropped 12% for women 40 and older. Despite these encouraging statistics, however, 22,000 infants die before they reach age 1.

“For Black women, that rate is over two times, so there’s still an unacceptable high racial disparity in infant mortality,” said Rahul Gupta, MD, MPH, chief medical and health officer at the March of Dimes in New York, who wasn’t involved in the study. “Infant mortality is unacceptable to begin with, but the enormous racial disparity must be addressed.”

The report also noted that women giving birth were increasingly more likely to be in their late 20s and up, with women age 40 and older leading the moms-to-be boom. (Births among women ages 25 to 29 increased by 9%, rose among those ages 30 to 35 by 24%, surged among those ages 35 to 39 by 30% and escalated by 39% for those 40 and older.)

CDC findings also revealed that fewer women under age 25 were having babies. Births to women under age 20 fell by 57% and by 21% for those between ages 20 and 24.

Gupta observed that the findings highlight the success achieved in curbing teenage pregnancies but remarked that this improvement more negatively affects women of color, specifically Black women.

For related coverage, read “Police Killings May Negatively Affect Health of Black Infants” and “Minority Infants More Likely to Receive Poor Care in NICUs.”

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.
http://beta.docker.realhealthmag.com/article/despite-drop-infant-mortality-black-babies-still-likelier-die