Infant Mortality Rates Hit an All-Time Low

It remains to be seen whether health gaps persist for Black infants, who historically experience the highest rates of infant mortality.

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Preliminary data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) show that infant mortality, or the death of an infant before their first birthday, in the United States dropped to an all-time low in 2025. It remains to be seen whether health gaps persist for Black infants, who historically experience the highest rates of infant mortality.

Infant mortality serves as an important marker of overall health for a country. In 2022, the most common causes of infant death were birth defects, preterm birth or low birth weight, sudden infant death syndrome, unintentional injuries or accidents and maternal pregnancy complications.

In the first quarter of 2023, the infant mortality rate was 5.69 deaths per 1,000 births; in the last quarter of 2025, the rate fell to 5.36 deaths per 1,000 births, lower than that of the last quarter of 2024, which was 5.54 deaths per 1,000 births.

The preliminary data also describe neonatal mortality (the number of infant deaths in their first 27 days) and postneonatal mortality (the number of infant deaths between ages 28 days to 11 months). Between the last quarter of 2024 and the last quarter of 2025, neonatal deaths fell from 3.67 per 1,000 births to 3.55 per 1,000 births, and postneonatal mortality deaths fell from 1.88 per 1,000 births to 1.81 per 1,000 births.

The most recent data by race, from 2023, showed that Black infant mortality rates were 95% higher than the overall infant mortality rate. Black babies were also 2.5 times more likely to die due to premature birth or low birthweight, according to the Office of Minority Health.

Black mothers experience higher maternal mortality rates, or deaths due to complications of pregnancy or childbirth. Although overall maternal mortality in the United States has been

decreasing since 2019, in 2024, the maternal mortality rate for Black women (44.8 deaths per 100,000 live births) was three times that of white women (14.2 deaths per 100,000 live births), according to the CDC.

To learn more about health disparities affecting Black women and babies, click #infant mortality and #women, where you can find stories like:

- "Despite Postpartum Medicaid Extension, Health Gap Persists for Black Women,"
- "Black Women Are More Likely to Have Unnecessary C-Sections,"
- "Being Black and Pregnant in the Deep South Can Be a Dangerous Combination,"
- "Report Highlights Infant Mortality Rates Among Black Ohioans" and
- "Racial Gaps in Declining U.S. Prenatal Care."

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