

U.S. Infant Mortality Rate Increased in 2022

From 2021 to 2022, the overall infant mortality rate in the United States increased by 3%.

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In 2022, [infant mortality](#) rates in the United States increased for the first time in more than two decades, according to a [report by the National Center for Health Statistics](#) (NCHS).

From 2021 to 2022, the overall infant mortality rate and the mortality rate for neonatal infants (birth to 28 days old) both increased by 3%. What's more, the postneonatal mortality rate (infants who lived past 28 days) increased by 4%, [CNN reported](#).

Infant deaths caused by maternal complications (e.g., [preeclampsia](#) or preterm birth) and bacterial sepsis increased significantly, by 8% and 14%, respectively.

"We live in a country with significant resources, so the infant mortality rate and the increase are shockingly high," said Sandy Chung, MD, president of the American Academy of Pediatrics, in an email to CNN. "As pediatricians who help children grow into healthy adults, any death of any child is one too many. The infant mortality rate in this country is unacceptable."

One of the report's authors, Danielle Ely, a health statistician at NCHS, noted that infant mortality is often a reflection of a country's overall health system. She said the increase in infant mortality could be a "weird blip" or the sign of a larger underlying issue. The [COVID-19 pandemic](#) could have also contributed to the increased mortality rate, Ely added.

The report also found that rates of infant mortality differed by racial group. For example, mortality rates for infants of American Indian or Alaska Native women increased by over 20%, from about 7.4 deaths per 1,000 births to over 9 deaths per 1,000 births. While there was no significant increase in mortality rates for infants of Black women, this group already experienced the highest overall rates of infant mortality: nearly 11 deaths per 1,000 births, more than double the mortality rate of white infants, according to CNN.

"We know that for people who live in or near poverty and for certain racial and ethnic groups, there are significant challenges with getting access to a doctor or getting treatments," Chung wrote. "This can lead to moms and babies showing up for care when they are sicker and more likely have serious outcomes, even death."

Experts attribute these [racial disparities](#) in part to “maternity care deserts,” areas lacking sufficient labor or delivery units.

Disparities in infant mortality rates have also been linked to a lack of diversity in the medical field. Rachel Hardeman, a professor of health and racial equity at the University of Minnesota, told CNN that she found that Black infants delivered by Black physicians had a higher survival rate. This was particularly true during maternal complications or challenging births.

“I see a 14% increase [in infant mortality from bacterial sepsis],” said Elizabeth Cherot, MD, president and CEO of March of Dimes, a nonprofit maternal and infant health advocacy organization, to CNN. “When I see double digits, I start to worry.”

This seems like a good enough ending point and avoids redundancy.

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