



CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

PRESS RELEASE

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Overall Infant Mortality Rate in United States Largely Unchanged *Rates Among Black Women More than Twice that of White Women*

The infant mortality rate in the United States in 2004 was 6.78 infant (under 1 year of age) deaths per 1,000 live births, not significantly different from the rate of 6.84 in 2003, according to a report released today by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The report, "Infant Mortality Statistics from the 2004 Period Linked Birth/Infant Death Data Set," also finds continued racial/ethnic differences in infant mortality rates.

Non-Hispanic black women had the highest infant mortality rate in the United States in 2004 – 13.60 per 1,000 live births compared to 5.66 per 1,000 births among non-Hispanic white women. Women of Cuban ethnicity in the United States had the lowest infant mortality rate – 4.55 per 1,000 live births.

Other infant mortality rates in the United States broken down by race and Hispanic origin include American Indian (8.45), Puerto Rican (7.82), Mexican (5.47), Asian/Pacific Islander (4.67) and Central/South American (4.65).

The overall infant mortality rate has declined by 10 percent since 1995, when the rate was 7.57 per 1,000 live births. However, the rate has not declined much since 2000 when it was 6.89.

Three years of data (2002-2004) were combined to get specific estimates of infant mortality rates by state, race and Hispanic origin. For the three-year period there were significant differences in infant mortality rates by state, ranging from a rate of 10.32 in Mississippi to 4.68 in Vermont. For infants of non-Hispanic black mothers, rates ranged from 17.57 in Wisconsin to 8.75 in Minnesota. For infants of non-Hispanic white mothers, the infant mortality rate ranged from 7.67 in West Virginia to 3.80 in New Jersey.

For multiple births, the infant mortality rate was 30.46, more than five times the rate of 5.94 for single births. The report also finds that infants born at 34-36 weeks gestation had infant mortality rates three times higher than for those born at 37-41 weeks gestation.

A second, related report, "Trends in Preterm-Related Infant Mortality by Race/Ethnicity: United States, 1999-2004," finds that in 2004, 36.1 percent of all infant deaths in the United States were due to preterm-related causes, up from 34.5 percent of all infant deaths in 1999.

Other findings from the second report:

- Nearly half (46 percent) of infant deaths to non-Hispanic black women and 40 percent of infant deaths to Puerto Rican women were due to preterm-related causes of death. The percentage was somewhat lower for other race/ethnic groups.
- Preterm-related infant mortality rates were more than three times higher for non-Hispanic black (6.24) than for non-Hispanic white (1.80) mothers. The preterm-related infant mortality rate for Puerto Rican (3.15) mothers was 75 percent higher than for non-Hispanic white mothers. Preterm-related infant mortality rates for American Indian (1.89), Mexican (1.72), and Asian or Pacific Islander (1.63) women were not significantly different from the rate for non-Hispanic white women.
- In 2004, the preterm-related infant mortality rate for non-Hispanic black mothers was actually higher than the infant mortality rate for all causes for non-Hispanic white, Mexican, and Asian or Pacific Islander women.

The two reports are available at www.cdc.gov/nchs.

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