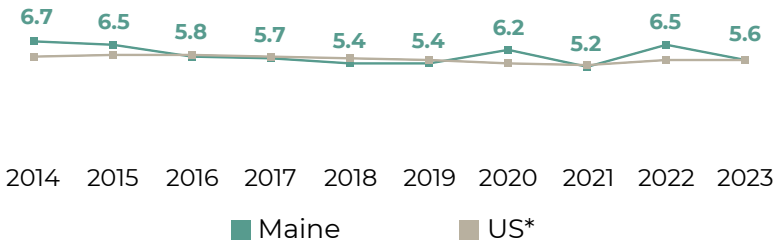
MAINE CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

Infant Mortality in Maine, 2023

A summary of deaths occurring before 1 year of age in Maine

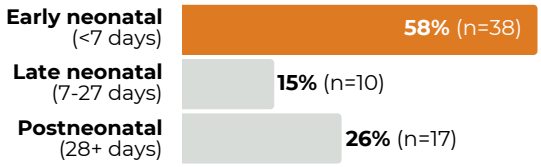
In 2023, there were **65** deaths among Maine resident infants. The infant mortality rate was **5.6 deaths per 1,000 live births**.

Infant Mortality Trend



Age at Death

More than half of the infants died during the **early neonatal period** (within 7 days of birth).



Cause of Death

The four most common causes of infant death were preterm-related, other perinatal causes, SIDS/SUID†, and congenital anomalies. These four causes account for 91% of the infant deaths in 2023.

Preterm-related (n=26)
2.2 deaths per 1,000 live births

SIDS/SUID (n=10)
0.9 deaths per 1,000 live births

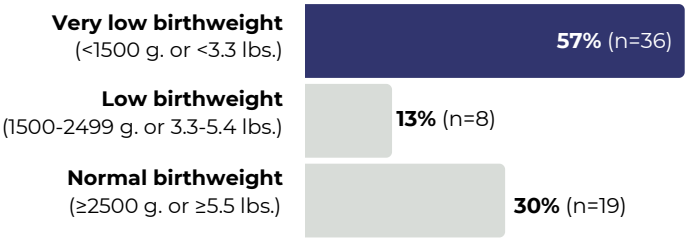
Other perinatal causes (n=14)
1.2 deaths per 1,000 live births

Congenital anomalies (n=9)
0.8 deaths per 1,000 live births

Preterm and low birthweight infants are at increased risk of morbidity and mortality compared to their term and normal birthweight peers.**

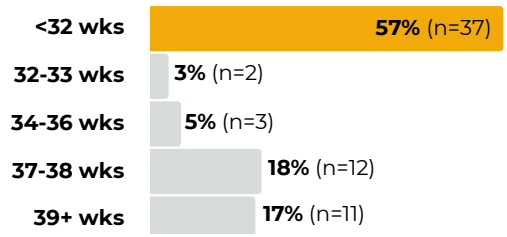
Birthweight

The majority of infant deaths occurred to **very low birthweight** infants.



Gestational Age

The majority of infant deaths occurred to **very preterm (<32 weeks gestation)** infants.



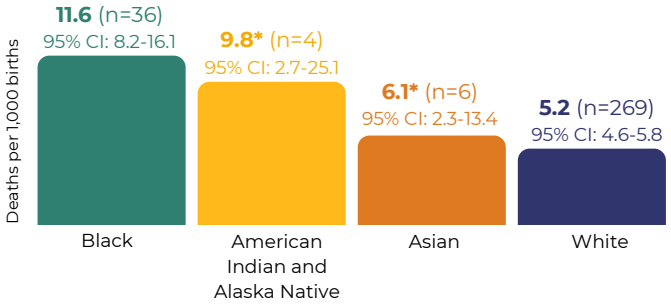
* Data source: US Linked Birth/Infant Death Records, CDC Wonder. The 2023 US rate is provisional and subject to change.
† SIDS/SUID = Sudden Infant Death Syndrome/Sudden Unexpected Infant Death. See www.cdc.gov/sudden-infant-death for more information.
** Behrman RE and Butler AS, eds. Preterm Birth: Causes, Consequences and Prevention, National Academies Press: Washington, DC; 2007.

Disparities in Infant Mortality, 2019-2023

Demographic, socioeconomic, and maternal health characteristics of infant deaths occurring between 2019-2023 (n=341) in Maine

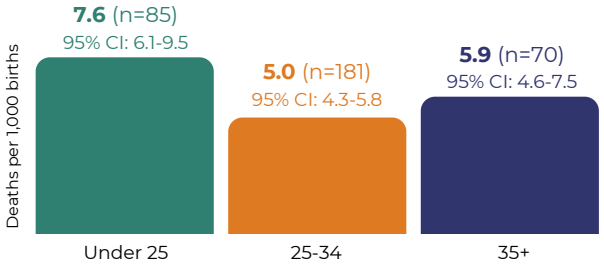
Race

Black and **American Indian and Alaska Native** birthing people experienced a higher infant mortality rate than **Asian** and **white** birthing people.**



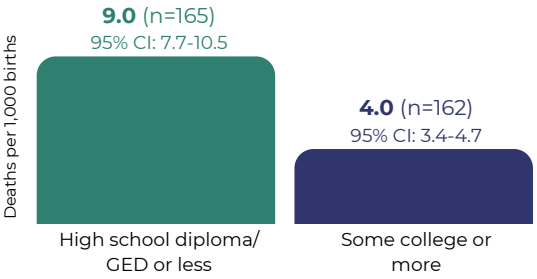
Age

Infants born to birthing people **under age 25** experienced a higher mortality rate than infants born to birthing people **ages 25-34** and ages **35+**.†



Education

Infants born to birthing people with a **high school diploma/GED or less** experienced a higher mortality rate than infants born to birthing people with **at least some college education**.†



Infant mortality rates were also higher for birthing people...

- who received **inadequate prenatal care**†
- for whom **MaineCare/Medicaid** was the primary delivery payer†
- who **smoked cigarettes** at all during pregnancy†

*Rates are calculated with fewer than 20 in the numerator. Interpret with caution.
**Infant mortality rates were higher for Black and American Indian/Alaska Native birthing people compared to white birthing people. These differences were not statistically significant due to sample size leading to unstable estimates, but the patterns mirror national inequities in infant mortality. Statistical significance was determined by comparing 95% confidence intervals.
† Infant mortality rates were significantly higher for birthing people under age 25, with a high school diploma or less, who received inadequate prenatal care, who were insured by MaineCare, or who smoked cigarettes during pregnancy.

Data source: *Linked birth / infant death records, Maine CDC Data, Research, and Vital Statistics (DRVS)*

WHAT ARE WE DOING ABOUT INFANT MORTALITY?

The Maine Maternal, Fetal, and Infant Mortality Review (MFIMR) Panel is charged to:

- identify factors that contribute to maternal, fetal, and infant mortality
- identify the strengths and weaknesses of the current maternal/infant health care delivery system
- make recommendations to decrease the rate of maternal, fetal, and infant mortality.

For more information, visit:

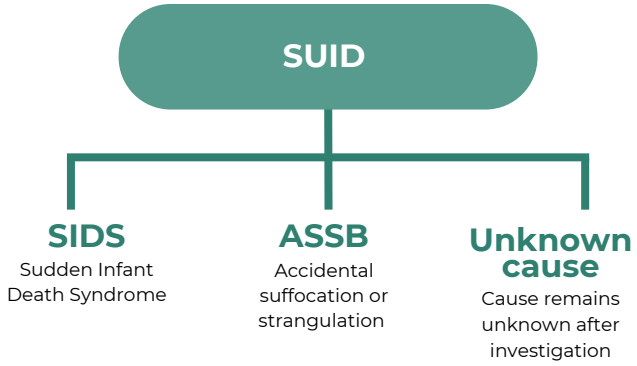
www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/population-health/mch/perinatal/maternal-infant

Special Topic: SIDS/SUID in Maine

Sudden Unexpected Infant Death (SUID) is a death to an infant under 1 year of age due to SIDS, ASSB, or an unknown cause.

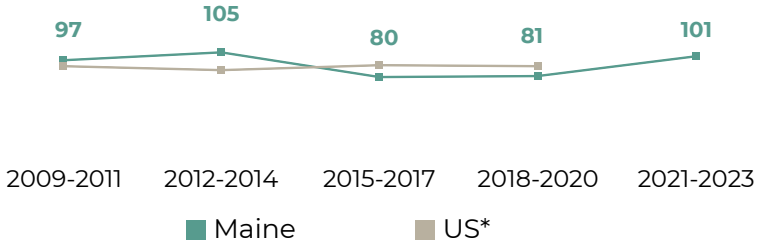
SUID is often, but not always, sleep-related.

SUID often occurs during sleep or in the infant's sleep environment, and safe sleep practices can help to reduce SUID risk. However, SUID includes deaths due to unknown causes, and these deaths may occur outside of a sleep environment.

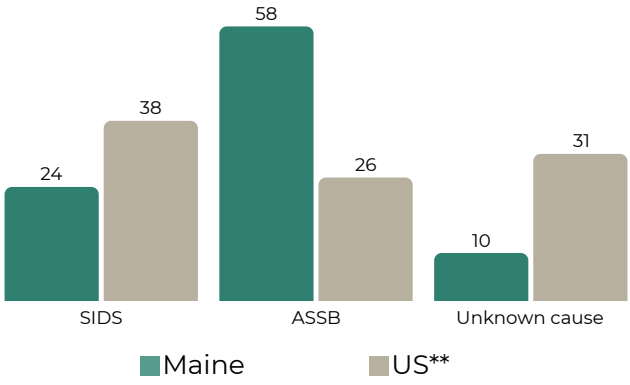


SUID rates have been increasing since 2020 nationwide despite decreases in overall infant mortality.† Maine has experienced a similar increase in the statewide SUID rate.

SUID Rates per 100,000 live births



In 2019-2023, the 5-year combined SUID rate in Maine was **92 deaths per 100,000 live births**. Rates per 100,000 live births by cause of death are shown below (2019-2023).



Disparities in SUID

Certain demographic and other characteristics are **more prevalent in SUIDs** compared to live births in Maine.‡ These factors include:

- Birthing person cigarette smoking during pregnancy
- Birthing parent substance use disorder
- Younger birthing parent age
- Low birthweight infant
- Preterm infant
- Inadequate prenatal care
- Infant not breastfed at time of hospital discharge

‡ Determined by comparing the demographic and risk factor distribution of SUIDs to the population of live births in Maine (2019-2023).

*Source: US Linked Birth/Infant Death Records, CDC Wonder. The 2021-2023 US rate is unavailable as US 2023 data are provisional and subject to change.
**US 5-year combined data excludes 2023 (only includes data for 2019-2022).
† Rodgers L. Amid Decreasing Infant Mortality, Sleep-Related Infant Deaths Are on the Rise. JAMA. Published online March 14, 2025. doi:10.1001/jama.2025.1345