Infant Mortality in California

**Infant Mortality Rate**

![Graph showing Infant Mortality Rate from 1994 to 2013 for the United States and California.](image)

**Definition:** Number of deaths of children under age 1 per 1,000 live births.

**Data Source:** California Dept. of Public Health, Death Statistical Master Files; CDC, Mortality data on WONDER (Apr. 2015); CDC, "Deaths: Final Data for 2013." (Apr. 2015).

**Infant Mortality Rate: 2011-2013; Showing Counties**

![Map showing Infant Mortality Rate for California counties.](image)

**Definition:** Number of deaths of children under age 1 per 1,000 live births.

**Data Source:** California Dept. of Public Health, Death Statistical Master Files; CDC, Linked Birth / Infant Death Records on WONDER, and "Deaths: Final Data for 2013." (Apr. 2015).

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**What It Is**

Kidsdata.org provides the following measures of infant mortality for the state and California counties:

- Infant mortality rate, as three-year averages
- Infant mortality rate by leading cause of death, as three-year averages
- Infant mortality rate by race/ethnicity, as five-year average (due to low numbers)

Kidsdata.org also provides the number and rate of infant deaths per year for California & U.S. only.

To show comparable information at the local and state levels, kidsdata.org lists only the leading causes of death in children for the state of California. The leading causes of infant deaths in California are very similar to the leading causes locally and nationally.

Kidsdata.org also provides data on deaths among older children.

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**Why This Topic Is Important**

Infant mortality is a key measure of a nation's health, as it reflects maternal health, quality of and access to medical care, socioeconomic conditions, and public health practices, among other factors (1, 2). Major causes of infant mortality include congenital malformations or abnormalities (birth defects); disorders relating to short gestation and low birthweight; maternal complications of pregnancy; and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (3). Reducing infant mortality requires wide-ranging approaches, such as ensuring access to: high-quality primary care prior to pregnancy; high-quality and timely prenatal and well-baby preventive care; specialty care for preterm infants and those with health conditions; breastfeeding support; immunizations; and safe, healthy environments (1).

Although the U.S. infant mortality rate has declined in recent decades, it still is higher than those in most other developed countries (1, 2). The infant mortality rate among African Americans remains particularly high—more than double the rate for white, Latino, and Asian/Pacific Islander infants, nationally and in California (3, 4).

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**How Children Are Faring**

California's infant mortality rate declined 33% between 1994 and 2013, from 7.0 per 1,000
Infant Mortality Rate, by Race/Ethnicity: 2009-2013

- **Definition:** Number of deaths of children under age 1 per 1,000 live births, by race/ethnicity.
- **Data Source:** California Dept. of Public Health, Death Statistical Master Files; CDC, Linked Birth / Infant Death Records on WONDER (Apr. 2015).

**Infant Mortality Rate, by Leading Cause of Death: 2011-2013**

- **Definition:** Number of deaths of children under age 1 per 1,000 live births, by leading causes of infant death in California.
- **Data Source:** California Dept. of Public Health, Death Statistical Master Files; CDC, Mortality data on WONDER (Apr. 2015).

Live births to 4.7, echoing national trends. Local infant mortality rates range widely, from 2.6 to 7.5 per 1,000 live births, among counties with available data in 2011-13. Statewide, in 2011-13 and previous years, the leading causes of infant deaths were birth defects and disorders related to preterm birth and low birthweight. Disparities persist in infant mortality rates by race/ethnicity, with California’s Asian/Pacific Islander and white infants having lower infant mortality rates than other racial/ethnic groups with available data.

View references for this text and additional research on this topic: [http://www.kidsdata.org/topic/54/infant-mortality/summary](http://www.kidsdata.org/topic/54/infant-mortality/summary)