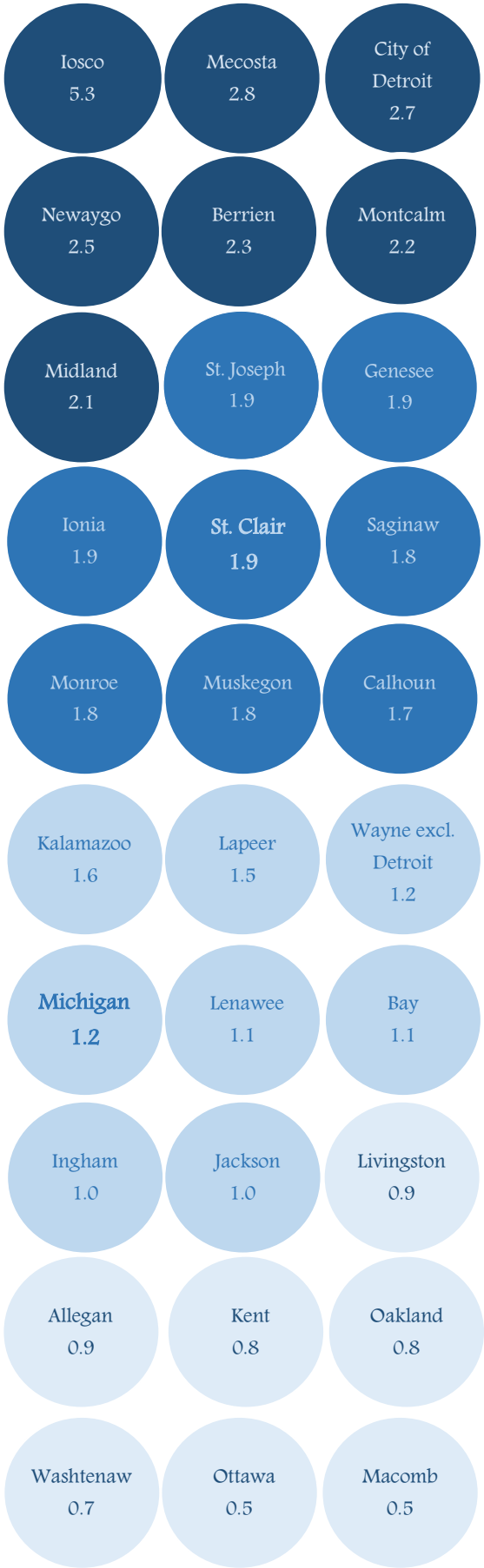
Sleep-Related Infant Deaths in St. Clair County

May 2016

Sleep-Related Infant Death Rates*, 2010-2014



Sleep-related infant deaths are those where the sleep environment was likely to have contributed to the death, including those ruled SIDS, SUID, suffocation, and other causes. The sleep-related infant death rate in St. Clair County is **1.9 deaths per 1,000 live births**, which is greater than the overall rate in Michigan (1.2 deaths per 1,000 live births).

A safe sleep environment can reduce the risk of sleep-related infant deaths. Infant safe sleep is a top priority in Michigan and is one of nine goals as part of Michigan's Infant Mortality Reduction Plan. Strategies within this plan include promoting safer infant sleep as well as addressing social issues and disparities that affect the infants' and mothers' health and well-being.

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends that infants: 1) sleep in a safety-approved crib, bassinet, or portable crib with a firm mattress and tight-fitting sheet, 2) sleep on surfaces separate from adults or other children free of blankets, pillows, or toys, and 3) be placed on his or her back for every sleep time.

There are a variety of factors that impact a caregiver's choices regarding their child's sleep environment and its importance in the caregiver's daily life. For many caregivers, these include the challenges of caring for a new infant without basic needs such as a social support system, transportation, stable housing, and healthy food.

In St. Clair County:

1 in 3 sleep-related deaths involve an infant sharing a sleep surface
Approximately 33% of sleep-related deaths occurred among infants who shared a sleep surface.

1 in 3 infants found unresponsive are not on their backs
Approximately 27% of infants who died of sleep-related causes were found on their stomach and 7% were found on their side.

2 in 3 sleep-related deaths occur in an unsafe sleep location
Approximately 33% of infants who died of sleep-related causes were placed in an adult bed, 20% were place in a playpen or other structure (not portable crib), 7% were placed on a couch, and 7% were placed in a car seat. Only 20% of infants who died of sleep-related causes were placed to sleep in a crib, bassinet or portable crib.

Note: Sleep surface sharing was unknown in 20% of deaths, found position was unknown in 40% of deaths, and sleep location was unknown in 13% of deaths.

*Rate per 1,000 live births

Other Factors Affecting Sleep-Related Infant Deaths

Besides safe sleep practices, other factors that may decrease the risk of sleep-related infant death include: breastfeeding, pacifier use at sleep time, and caregiver avoidance of smoking, alcohol and illicit drug use while caring for an infant.

53% of mothers of infants who died of sleep-related causes in St. Clair County smoked during pregnancy. This compared to 18% of all Michigan mothers.[2]

47% of mothers of infants who died of sleep-related causes in St. Clair County ever breastfed. This compared to 75% of all Michigan mothers.[3]

What Can You Do?

Health professionals can

- ✓ Encourage parents to always place their baby in a safe sleep environment
- ✓ Provide individuals caring for pregnant women, infants, and caregivers with strategies to promote a consistent safe sleep environment. Free online training is available through the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (www.michigan.gov/safesleep).
- ✓ Order brochures, posters, or DVDs about safe sleep through the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services Clearinghouse at www.healthymichigan.com

Parents can

- ✓ Always place your baby in a safe sleep environment
- ✓ Do not allow smoking around your baby
- ✓ Breastfeed your baby, if possible
- ✓ Offer a pacifier when placing your baby down to sleep
- ✓ Be sure that everyone who cares for your baby knows how to place your baby down to sleep in a safe sleep environment
- ✓ If you are feeling overwhelmed or exhausted, ask for help. There are early childhood home visiting programs designed to assist families in caring for infants. They can provide you with support and connect you to the resources you need. To find a program in your area, go to www.michigan.gov/mihp.

Resources for Parents and Health Professionals

For more information on safe sleep, as well as tips for soothing a crying baby and product recalls by the Consumer Product Safety Commission, parents and health professionals can go to www.michigan.gov/safesleep

A number of free health resources for before, during, and after pregnancy are available by calling 2-1-1 or by going to mihealthybaby.mobi

Free resources to help you quit smoking are available by calling the Michigan Tobacco Quitline at 1-800-QUIT-Now or 1-855-DEJELO-YA

Information on breastfeeding and available breastfeeding support services can be found at www.michigan.gov/wic (click on 'Breastfeeding')

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Sleep-related infant deaths in St. Clair County from 2010-2014

Males account for more sleep-related deaths than females (60% vs. 40%)

5 in 9 infants died before the age of 4 months

1 in 6 infants was born preterm (less than 37 weeks)

8 in 9 infants were White and 1 in 9 infants was African American or multi-racial

3 in 4 infants had publicly-funded health insurance

The average age of the mother was 25 years

[1]Sleep-related infant deaths are defined in Michigan as deaths to infants less than 1 year of age that occur suddenly and unexpectedly and include sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), undetermined/sudden unexplained infant death (SUID), suffocation/positional asphyxia, and other causes wherein the sleep environment was likely to have contributed to the death. Death data are by county of residence from CDC SUID Case Registry, Michigan Public Health Institute, 2016. Birth data are from Michigan Resident Birth Files, Division for Vital Records and Health Statistics, Michigan Department of Community Health, 2016.

[2]2014 Michigan Resident Birth Files, Division for Vital Records & Health Statistics, Michigan Department of Health & Human Services; retrieved at www.mdch.state.mi.us/pha/osr/Chi/births14/frameBxChar.html

[3]Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 2015; www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/pdf/2014breastfeedingreportcard.pdf

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