

A MICHIGAN BABY DIES EVERY TWO - THREE DAYS DUE TO SLEEP-RELATED CAUSES.

Following the safe sleep steps can help prevent sleep-related infant deaths.

Sleep-related infant deaths are those where the sleep environment (blankets, pillows, people, pets, etc.) likely contributed. If all sleep-related deaths were prevented, Michigan's infant mortality rate for 2020 would have **decreased by 23.5%, saving 161 babies.**

1,597 babies died due to sleep-related causes from 2010-2020.

Disparities exist:

- Black infants (**3.8 times higher**) and American Indian infants (**2.5 times higher**) are more likely to die than white infants.
- Preterm infants are **2.6 times** more likely to die in a sleep environment than full-term infants.
- Low-birth-weight infants (weighing less than 5.5 pounds) are **3.0 times** more likely to die than infants weighing 5.5 pounds or more.



75%

of deaths occurred in an unsafe location, like an adult bed, couch or chair. **Babies should sleep in a crib, bassinet or pack and play.**

69%

of deaths had objects in the sleep environment, like blankets, pillows. **Babies should have nothing in their sleep environment.**





58%

of deaths involved infant sharing a sleep surface. **Babies should share a room, not a bed.**

51%

of the infants who died were residents of:

- Wayne County
- Oakland County
- Genesee County
- Kent County



In addition to practicing the safe sleep steps, breastfeeding and keeping baby in a smoke-free and nicotine-free environment could significantly reduce sleep-related deaths.

Racial and ethnic disparities are primarily the result of the impacts of systemic racism. The following have been shown to be protective for families:

- Breastfeeding
- Health care coverage
- Home visiting programs
- Living wage
- Paid parental leave
- Parental support system
- Safe, affordable housing
- Safe sleep environment

To learn more about safe sleep, visit Michigan.gov/SafeSleep. To learn more about systemic racism and disparities, visit the [MDHHS Maternal & Infant Health, Health Equity webpage](#).

Data Sources

2020 Michigan Resident Birth and Death Files, Division for Vital Records and Health Statistics, MDHHS

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Sudden Unexpected Infant Death Case Registry – 2010 to 2020, Michigan Public Health Institute, 2023

