Infant Mortality and Our Community’s Health

Infant mortality is an indicator of a community’s overall health. Sudden unexpected infant death (SUID), including sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), is a leading cause of infant mortality in Spokane County. In Spokane County from 2018 to 2021, SUID was the:

- 3rd leading cause of death during infancy (the first year of life).
- 1st leading cause of death after an infant’s first month of life until their first birthday.

Your Actions Impact Infant Survival

We all have a role in preventing SUID. Together, we can increase infant survival and allow children and families to celebrate more birthdays in Spokane County.

Promoting Safe Sleep for Infant Survival

Infant sleep practices are the most important SUID risk factors that individuals have control over. Promoting safe sleep to increase infant survival requires a community approach where:

- Public health promotes evidence-based safe sleep recommendations and provides messaging tools for sharing these recommendations.
- Medical, social service, and childcare professionals consistently endorse, discuss, and model safe sleep recommendations, starting at the beginning of pregnancy, and use risk mitigation when appropriate.
- Content makers, advertisers, and business owners model safe sleep recommendations in all digital content, print content, advertising, and retail displays related to infant sleep.
- Parents and caregivers of infants create, follow, and share a safe sleep plan for their baby which focuses on reducing their baby’s risk of SUID.
- Friends and family members of parents and caregivers of infants affirm safe sleep choices and offer practical and emotional support.

Improving Health Equity for Infant Survival

The U.S. has the world’s highest prevalence of SUID, and, among high-income counties, the highest nationwide SUID rate per live births. Globally, SUID occurs primarily among marginalized and poor people in wealthy countries. In addition to promoting safe sleep, we can increase infant survival in our community by improving health equity. Persistent disparities in SUID rates reflect broader patterns of inequities. In Washington State from 1999 to 2021, American Indian/Alaska Native infants, Black infants, Pacific Islander infants, and multi-race infants died from SUID at disproportionately high rates compared to White infants. During this same time, Asian and Hispanic infants died from SUID at lower rates compared to White infants.

We can improve health equity in Spokane County to increase infant survival through individual practices, organizational practices, and policies promoting:

- Equitable distribution of resources.
- Access to respectful, comprehensive care for everyone.

Your Next Step

Scan to visit srhd.org/SUID and find additional information and tools to prevent SUID in Spokane County.
References


