

Sleep-Related Infant Deaths in Calhoun County

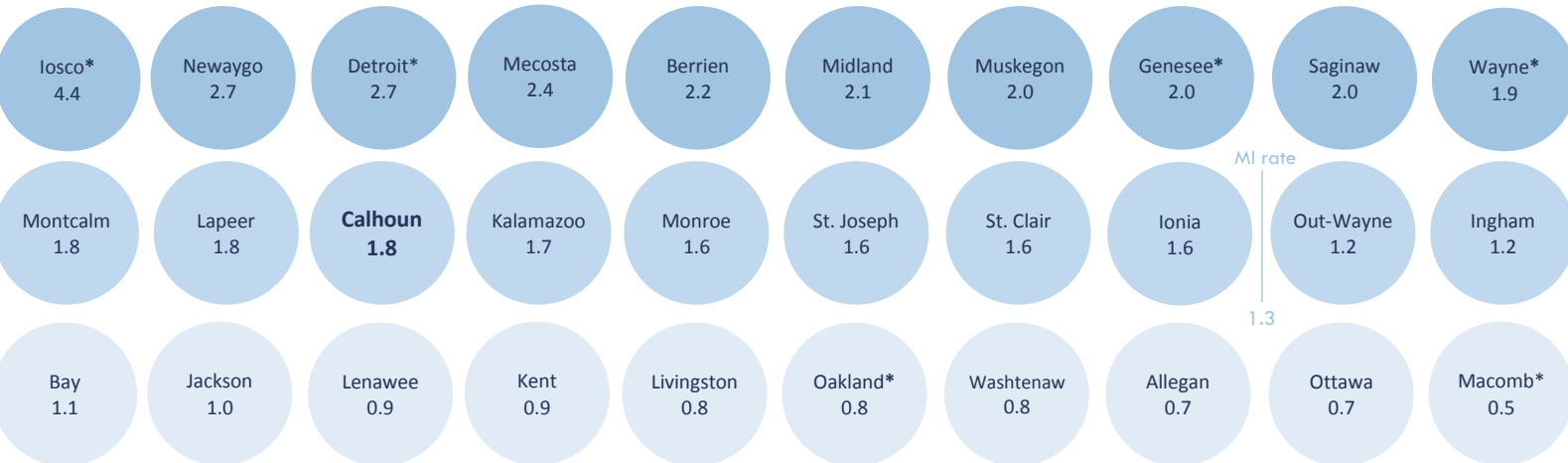
February 2017

Sleep-related infant death is a leading cause of death among infants less than 1 year. Infant safe sleep is a top priority in Michigan and is one of nine goals as part of the state's Infant Mortality Reduction Plan. Strategies within this plan include promoting safer infant sleep practices as well as addressing social issues and disparities that affect the infants' and mothers' health and well-being.

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. In Calhoun County, undetermined cause is the most common cause of sleep-related death followed by suffocation.

From 2010 to 2015, there were 18 sleep-related infant deaths, which is a rate of 1.8 deaths per 1,000 live births.

The sleep-related infant death rate in Calhoun County is **greater than the overall rate in Michigan (1.3 deaths per 1,000 live births)**.



Rate per 1,000 live births

*Denotes a rate that is statistically significantly different at the 95% level from the overall state rate.

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.

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends that an infant:

- 1 Be placed on his or her back for every sleep time
- 2 Sleep in a safety-approved crib, bassinet, or portable crib with a firm mattress and tight-fitting sheet
- 3 Sleep on a surface separate from adults or other children free of blankets, pillows, or toys

Bed-sharing is not recommended for any infants, however, room-sharing is. Keeping an infant's sleep area in the same room for at least the first six months is recommended.

In Calhoun County:



3 in 5 infants found unresponsive are not on their backs

Approximately 50% of infants who died of sleep-related causes were found on their stomach and 11% were found on their side. Sleep position was unknown or missing in 11% of deaths.



3 in 4 sleep-related deaths occur in an unsafe sleep location

Approximately 61% of infants who died of sleep-related causes were placed in an adult bed, 6% were placed on a couch, and 6% were placed in other unsafe sleep locations. Only 28% of infants who died of sleep-related causes were placed to sleep in a crib, bassinet or portable crib. A crib, bassinet or portable crib was not present in the home in 11% of deaths.



3 in 5 sleep-related deaths involve an infant sharing a sleep surface

Approximately 61% of sleep-related deaths occurred among infants who shared a sleep surface, the majority of which involved an adult bed. Of the deaths where objects were known to be in the sleeping environment, the majority involved two or more objects. Of these, the most common objects were adults and/or children, mattresses, thin blankets/flat sheets, comforters, and pillows.

A safe sleep environment can reduce the risk of all sleep-related infant deaths.

Infant, Maternal & Regional Characteristics

Females accounted for more sleep-related deaths than males (56% vs. 44%)



3 in 5 infants were Black or multi-racial



1 in 9 infants was born preterm (less than 37 weeks)



The average age of the mother was 23 years



89% of infants had publicly-funded coverage



3 in 5 infants died before the age of 4 months



78% of deaths occurred in the infant's home; 17% occurred in a relative's home



28% of mothers smoked any time during pregnancy. This compared to 16% of all Michigan mothers.²



Breastfed babies have a lower risk of sleep-related death

The AAP recommends breastfeeding as the sole source of infants' nutrition for the first six months. The protective effect of breastfeeding increases with exclusivity. However, any breastfeeding has been shown to be more protective against deaths from sleep-related causes than no breastfeeding.



22% of mothers of infants who died of sleep-related causes had ever breastfed. This compared to 81% of all Michigan mothers.³

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.

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 infant 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')

¹Sleep-related infant deaths are defined as deaths to Michigan resident 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 where 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, 2017. Birth data are from Michigan Resident Birth Files, Division for Vital Records and Health Statistics, Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, 2017.

²Michigan Resident Birth Files, Division for Vital Records & Health Statistics (2015), Michigan Department of Health and Human Services; retrieved at www.mdch.state.mi.us/pha/osr/natality/RisksRacePer.asp

³National Immunization Survey, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Department of Health and Human Services (2013 births), retrieved at https://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/data/nis_data/index.htm

Prepared by the Michigan Public Health Institute, Center for Child and Family Health, 2017. Please direct questions and comments to Katie Parker, Project Coordinator at (517) 324-8397.