Facts on Kids in South Dakota
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25 Years in Review
1993-2018

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**Infant Mortality**

*Definition: Infant deaths under one year of age. The rate is calculated per 1,000 live births.*

The first year in the life of a baby is more fragile than later years of childhood, negative social conditions such as poverty have a greater impact on this vulnerable group. Although infant mortality rates for the United States have been declining over the past several decades, the nation ranks poorly on an international level. Infant mortality has two components: neonatal, deaths of infants younger than 28 days, and post neonatal mortality, or deaths between 28 days and one year old.

When Governor Dennis Daugaard was elected in January 2011, the infant mortality rate was higher than surrounding states as it had been for decades. Gov. Daugaard asked his wife, South Dakota First Lady Linda Daugaard, to chair a 27-member task force on infant mortality in South Dakota. In the final task force report, recommendations including prenatal care, the promotion of safe sleeping practices, education on the harm of tobacco, and developing resources for health care professionals specific to infant mortality prevention were made to attempt to reduce the infant mortality rate to 6.0 by the year 2020.

“I worked with a group of doctors, nurses, tribal health care workers, midwives, social workers and Department of Health officials to understand the causes of the problem.” says Linda Daugaard.

**SD First Lady Linda Daugaard**

**How to Reduce Infant Mortality**

- Decide against early elective deliveries (EEDs)
- Abstain from tobacco
- Learn safe sleep practices
- Start PNC in 1st trimester
Prenatal care is an important factor to consider as women become pregnant and start their journey to motherhood. Prenatal visits reduce the risk of pregnancy complications, and give doctors the ability to spot and treat health issues early. In 2016 alone, nearly 73% of mothers started prenatal care in their first trimester in South Dakota. Compared to the five year estimates from 1993-97, prenatal care has dropped by 12%. This rate is alarming because while infant mortality rates are decreasing, low birth weight rates have not significantly changed over the past 25 years.

Mothers who participate in prenatal care can be influenced by race and income, 79% of White mothers, 53% of American Indian mothers, and 55% of mothers of Other Races had early prenatal care during their 1st trimester. Households whose earnings totaled less than $10,000 a year had a rate of 52% of mothers participating in prenatal care. However, households that earned $75,000 a year or more had a prenatal care rate of 87%.

According to the United Health Foundation’s America’s Health Rankings in 2017, South Dakota ranked #2 in the country for the low birth weight indicator. The only state that ranked higher than South Dakota was Alaska.

To reduce the risk of low birth weight deliveries, it is especially important that the mother abstains from smoking and tobacco products during pregnancy.

| Factors that can increase the risk of a baby being born with a low birth weight. |
|-----------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Smoking | Poor Nutrition | Poverty |
| Stress | Infections | Violence |

Low Birth Weight

**Definition:** Live births weighing less than 2,500 grams (5.5 pounds).

Babies born with a low birth weight have a high probability of experiencing developmental problems. Babies are also prone to short- and long-term disabilities and are at a greater risk of dying within the first year of life.

In 1993, 5.5% of babies who were born to South Dakota mothers weighed less than 5.5 pounds. The rate of babies born with low birth weights increased by 24% between 1993 and 2010 in South Dakota. Between 2010 and 2015, the rate decreased by 10% possibly due to the infant mortality task force.

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14% of South Dakota mothers smoked during their pregnancy in 2016.

Prenatal Care

**Definition:** Treats and prevents potential health problems throughout the course of the pregnancy and to promote healthy lifestyles that benefit both mother and child.

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Sources: Department of Health, KIDS COUNT Data Center, News.sd.gov, ForBabySakeSD.com
Tobacco Use in South Dakota High Schools During The Past 25 Years

Percentage of students who smoked cigarettes on one or more of the past 30 days

- 1992: 34%
- 2015: 10%

71% DECREASE

Percentage of students who ever tried cigarette smoking, even one or two puffs

- 1992: 72%
- 2015: 33%

54% DECREASE

Percentage of students who used chewing tobacco or snuff during the past 30 days

- 1992: 18%
- 2015: 12%

33% DECREASE

Source: Youth Risk Behavior Survey 1992 & 2015, Department of Health

The first wealth is health.
-Ralph Waldo Emerson