



Keeping Babies Healthy

Infant mortality is the death of an infant before his or her first birthday. It is often described as a rate of deaths per 1,000 live births. Additionally, the infant mortality rate is often used as a barometer to measure the general health of a community.

Berrien County Statistics

Eight years ago, Berrien County was ranked the WORST county in the state of Michigan, with infants born to black women dying at a rate of 22 deaths per 1,000 live births. However, these rates are going down and more babies are growing up healthy.

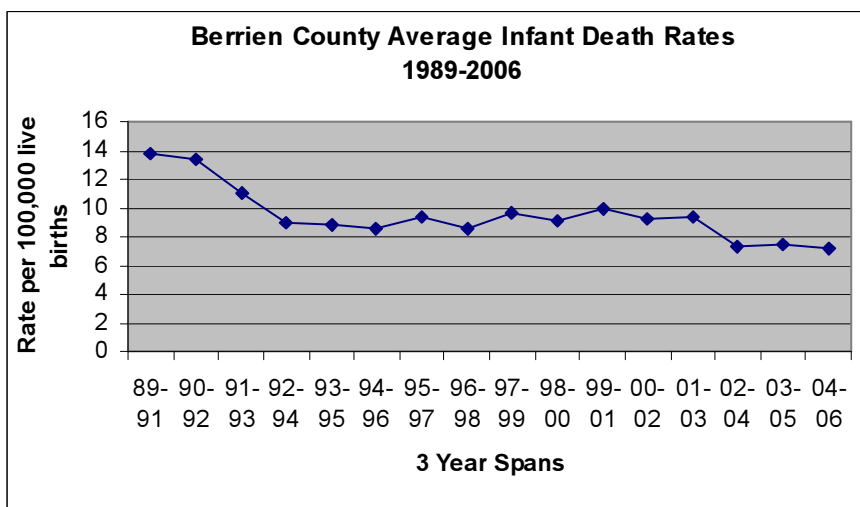
Since 1995, the African-American infant mortality rate in Berrien County has reduced by over 30%, and the Caucasian infant mortality rate has reduced by 20%. Berrien is now below the state average for in-

fant mortality. This decrease is due in part to education and interventions for safe sleep.

Raising Up Healthy Babies

Several years ago, the State of Michigan helped fund the creation of a group called Raising Up Healthy Babies (formerly the Infant Mortality Reduction Task Force). This group includes professionals and community members concerned

about infant mortality in Berrien County, and has worked on public education and other programs to reduce infant mortality, including the Safe Sleep Campaign, publication of the Great Start Resource Guide (resources for maternal and infant health), and the House to House program (a community based program to educate on maternal and infant health).



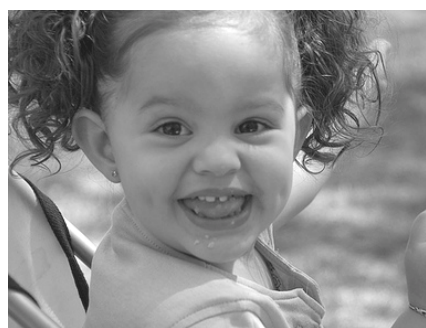
Available Services to Prevent Infant Deaths

There are many programs that help to reduce the infant death rate that can be accessed through the health department. The programs include:

The Nurse Family Partnership (NFP) Program, which pairs BCHD registered nurses who make home visits with first-time mothers throughout pregnancy and for two years after birth.

Prenatal Care (including Maternal and Infant Health Program). Many of the babies who die are born too soon and too small. This program educates pregnant women about the signs and symptoms of pre-term labor and provide access to early prenatal care.

Baby's Own Bed (BOB), which provides portable cribs for eligible low-income families who otherwise would have no safe place for their infants to sleep.



Family Planning Many infants who die are conceived as the result of unintended pregnancies, so efforts are underway to prevent unplanned pregnancies through family planning and

abstinence programs.

Breast-Feeding Peer Counselor. Breast-fed babies statistically fare better than formula fed infants, so efforts are underway to encourage new mothers to breast-feed their babies.

Inter-Conception Health Services. Babies born to women who get pregnant very quickly after having a child or wait many years between children are at greater risk for potentially serious delivery-related complications, including premature birth and low birth weight.

Safe-Sleep Education Many babies are dying when they are put to sleep in places that are not safe.

Berrien County Health

Department:
Preventing Disease,
Prolonging Life and
Protecting the
Health of the
Community.



Healthy Beginnings

January is Healthy Beginnings month. This month, the health department will bring you information about topics to begin new life in a healthy way, including Interconception Care, Breast Feeding, and Family Planning. For questions about any of these topics, please call the health department at

926-7121.

Safe Sleep Tips:

1. Baby sleeps by him/herself in a crib, portable crib or bassinet.
2. Always put baby to sleep on his or her BACK even when he or she can roll over.
3. Nothing in sleep area. No pillows, blankets, comforters, stuffed animals, or other soft things.
4. Keep baby's face uncovered during sleep for easy breathing. Use a sleeper instead of a blanket.
5. Don't allow anyone to smoke anything around baby.
6. Don't overheat the baby. Dress the baby in as much or as little clothing as you wear.
7. Use a firm mattress with tightly fitted sheet.



For more information about infant mortality prevention programs, call the Health Department:

926-7121

The Berrien County Health Department has five locations to serve you:

Benton Harbor

769 Pipestone
P.O. Box 706
926-7121

M-139 Office
2106 S. M-139
927-5623

Niles

1205 N. Front St.
684-2800

Three Oaks

21 N. Elm
756-2008

Or visit us on the web at www.bchdmi.org

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