

# Infant Mortality

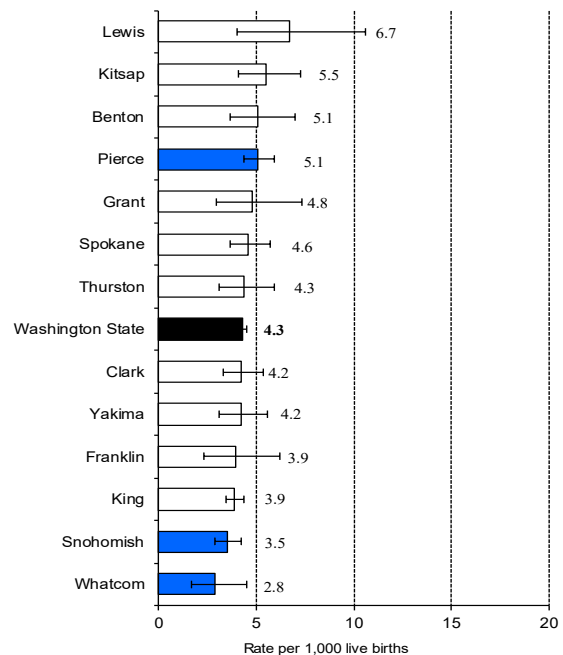
## Key Findings:

- In 2019, the most recent year for which data are available, 366 Washington State infants died in their first year of life, an infant mortality rate (IMR) of 4.3 per 1,000 live births, which is lower than the 2019 national IMR of 5.6 per 1,000 live births. Washington State is meeting the Healthy People 2030 objective of less than 5.0 per 1,000 live births.<sup>1,2,5</sup>
- The three leading causes of infant death in Washington State in 2019 were birth defects (25 percent), Sudden Unexpected Infant Death Syndrome (SUID) (15 percent), and Short Gestation/Low Birth Weight (10 percent).<sup>1</sup>
- Most (66 percent) infant deaths for 2017-2019 occurred in the first month of life.<sup>1</sup>
- Infants born to non-Hispanic American Indian/Alaska Native, non-Hispanic Black/African American or non-Hispanic Pacific Islander birthing persons had higher mortality rates than those born to non-Hispanic White mothers.<sup>1</sup>
- Washington State had the second lowest non-Hispanic Black/African American IMR of the 40 states ranked, the lowest Hispanic IMR of the 41 states ranked, the sixth lowest non-Hispanic Pacific Islander IMR of 34 states ranked, and the fourth lowest non-Hispanic American Indian and Alaskan Native IMR of 13 states ranked in 2015-2017 (the most comparison data available).<sup>3</sup>
- Infant mortality was higher among teenage birthing persons compared other birthing person age groups, births covered by Medicaid compared with births not covered by Medicaid, and among male compared with female infants.<sup>1,4</sup>

**Definition:** Infant mortality is the death of a child under one year of age. These deaths are often divided into two groups: *Neonatal* mortality (death of an infant within the first 27 days of life) and *Postneonatal* mortality (death of an infant of 28-364 days of age). Infant mortality rates are calculated using “period” method unless otherwise noted.<sup>a</sup>

- Infant mortality increases dramatically as infant birth weight decreases. In 2017-2019 approximately 5 percent of infants born in Washington State weighing between 1000 and 1,500 grams died.<sup>1</sup>

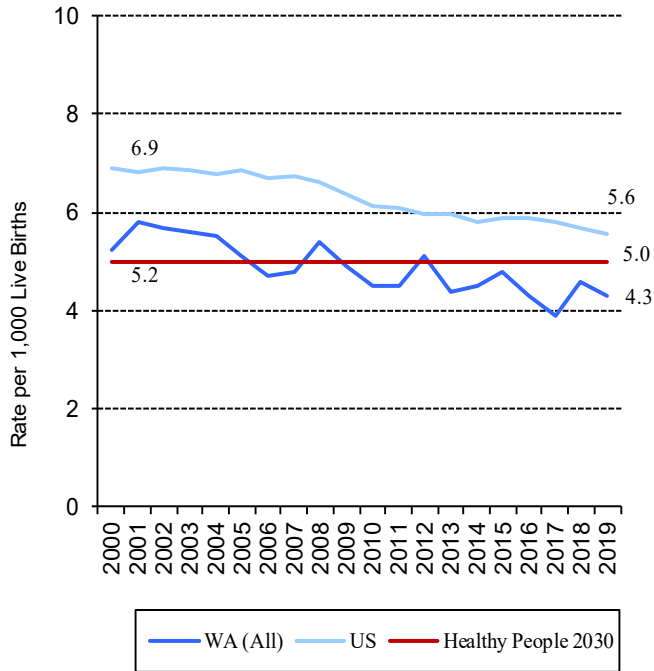
**WA Infant Mortality Rate by County, 2017-2019**<sup>1,2,a</sup>



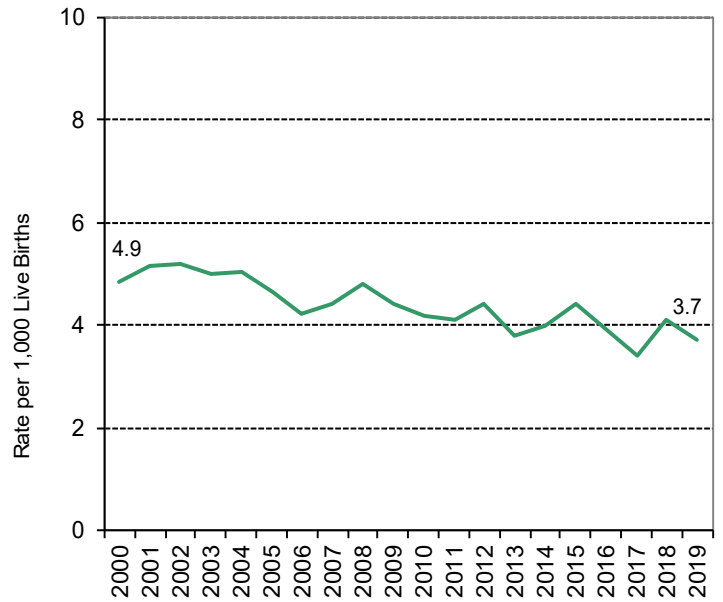
County rates are not shown for Adams, Asotin, Chelan, Clallam, Columbia, Douglas, Ferry, Garfield, Grays Harbor, Island, Jefferson, Kittitas, Klickitat, Lincoln, Mason, Okanogan, Pacific, Pend Oreille, San Juan, Skagit, Skamania, Stevens, Wahkiakum, Walla Walla and Whitman counties. These counties had a relative standard error of the rate  $\geq 25$  percent.

  *Varies significantly from state rate,  $p > .05$ .*

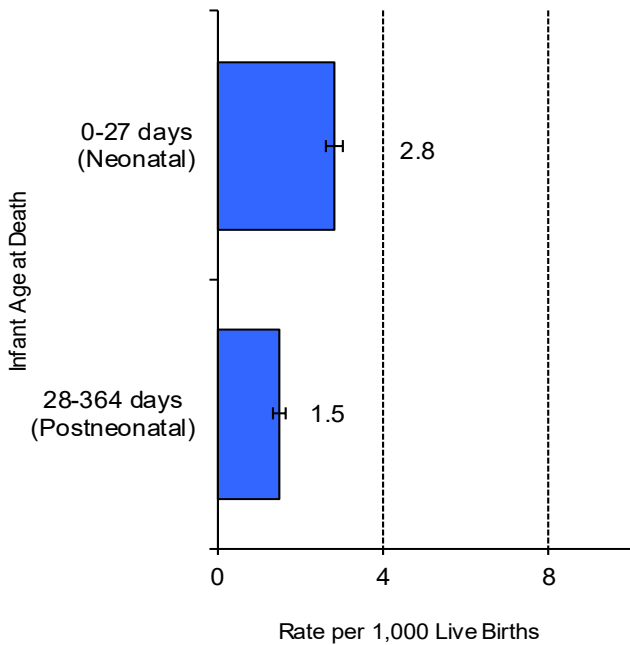
**Infant Mortality Rate (All Births) by Year<sup>1,2,a</sup>**



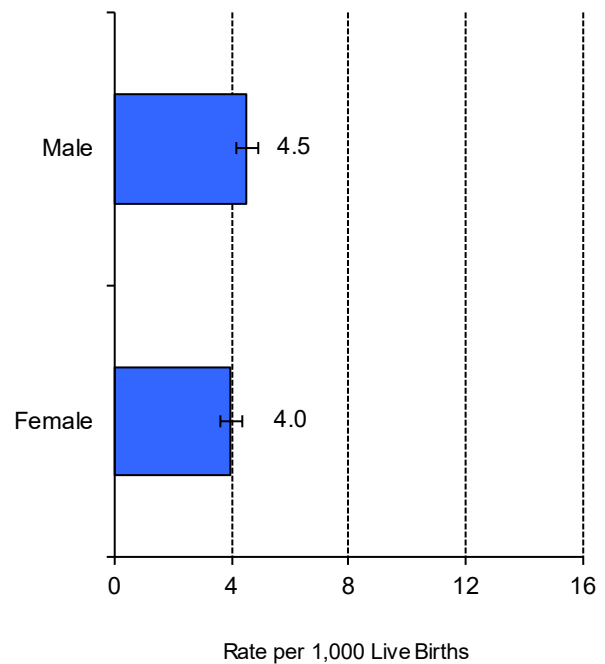
**WA Infant Mortality Rate (Singleton) by Year<sup>1,2,a</sup>**



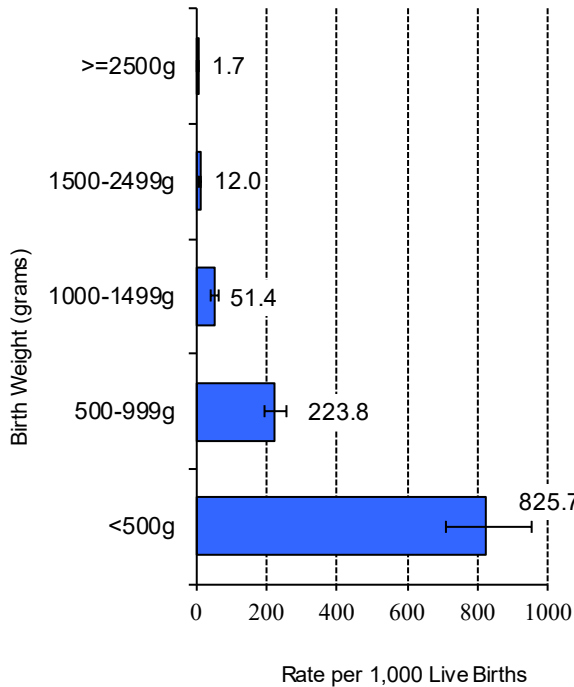
**Infant Mortality by Infant Age, 2017-2019<sup>1,2,a</sup>**



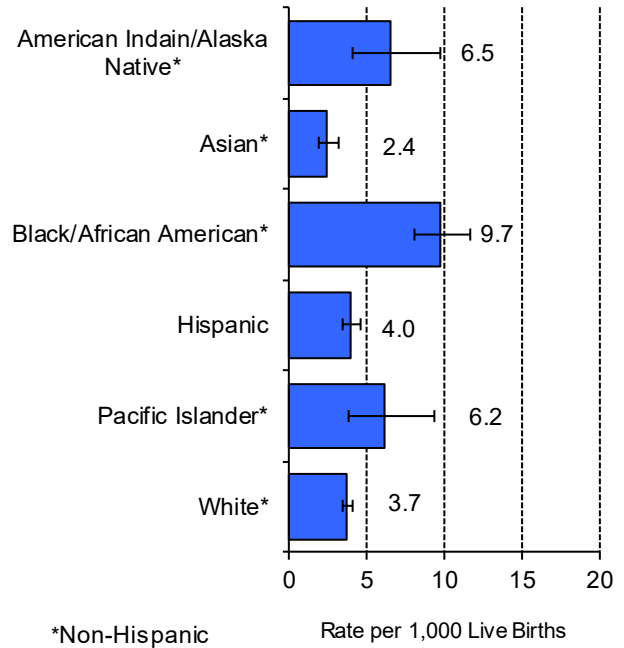
**Infant Mortality by Infant Sex, 2017-2019<sup>1,2,a</sup>**



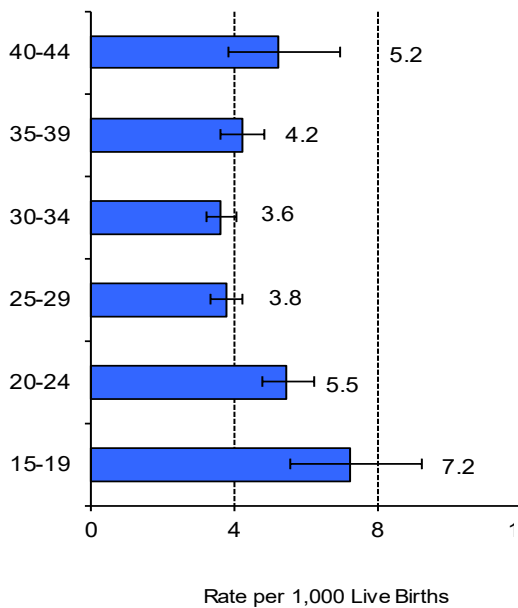
**Infant Mortality by Birth Weight, 2017-2019<sup>1,2,a</sup>**



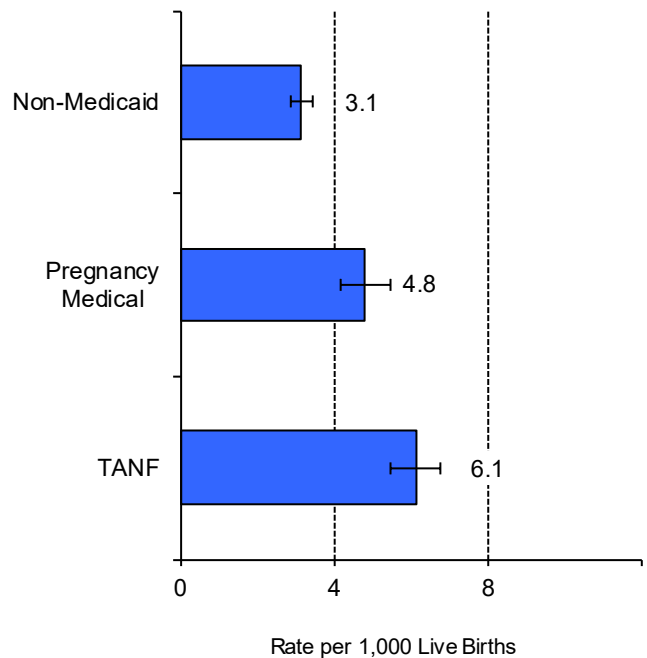
**Infant Mortality by Mother's Race and Ethnicity, 2017-2019<sup>1,2,a</sup>**



**Infant Mortality by Mother's Age, 2017-2019<sup>1,2,a</sup>**



**Infant Mortality (Cohort) by Medicaid, 2017-2019<sup>4,b,c</sup>**



1. Washington State Department of Health, Center for Health Statistics, Linked Birth/Infant Death File, 2017-2019, December 2021.
2. Ely DM, Driscoll AK. Infant mortality in the United States, 2019: Data from the period linked birth/infant death file. National Vital Statistics Reports; vol 70 no 14. Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics, 2021.
3. Ely DM, Driscoll AK. Infant mortality in the United States, 2017: Data from the period linked birth/infant death file. National Vital Statistics Reports, vol 68 no 10. Hyattsville, MD. National Center for Health Statistics. 2019.
4. Washington State Health Care Authority, Selected Measures by Medicaid Status for Live Births Washington State. Department of Social and Health Services, Research and Data Analysis. 4/15/2021.
5. Healthy People 2030, US Department of Health and Human Services. <https://health.gov/healthypeople/objectives-and-data/browse-objectives/infants/reduce-rate-infant-deaths-mich-02>

#### **Endnotes**

- a. Period Infant Mortality Rates use infant deaths in a given year as the numerator and infant births in the same year as the denominator.
- b. Cohort Infant Mortality Rates look at the experience of a birth cohort. The denominator includes all births in a specified year (cohort) and the numerator is the deaths that occurred to that cohort in the first year of life.
- c. Medicaid recipients were divided into three major subgroups based on program eligibility. **Pregnancy Medical** were individuals eligible for the pregnancy medical assistance program. These individuals were U.S. citizens or legal US residents and were eligible to receive Medicaid because they were pregnant and had incomes at or below 195% the federal poverty line; **TANF** were individuals enrolled in the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. These individuals were very low income (generally < 50% the federal poverty level) and received cash assistance (TANF) in addition to Medicaid

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