

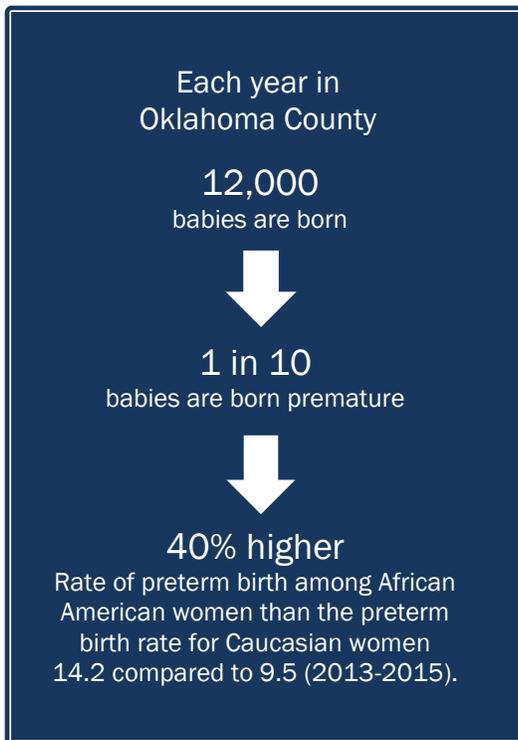


Infant Mortality

Preterm Birth

Prematurity

(also called preterm birth) is the leading cause of infant mortality in the African American community.



Infant Mortality is one of the most sensitive indicators often used to measure the health and well-being of a population.¹

Infant mortality means the death of an infant before their first birthday. Infant mortality rate (IMR) is the number of infant deaths per 1,000 live births.

Oklahoma County's infant mortality rate of 7.0 (2013-2015) represents an 8 percent decline from 7.6 (2010-2012).

There are significant differences in infant mortality rates by race and ethnicity in the U.S. and in Oklahoma.

In Oklahoma County, the mortality rate for African American infants more than doubles that of Caucasian infants (12.7 compared to 5.8 deaths per 1,000 live births).²

Premature birth (also known as preterm) occurs before 37 weeks of pregnancy.

Babies born early fail to benefit from valuable time to grow and develop. They may have more health problems compared to babies born at full term.

Premature birth is one of the greatest contributors to infant death. Most preterm-related deaths occur among babies who were born very preterm (before 32 weeks).³



WHY?

There are several key factors that can influence risk of a preterm birth

Stress

Increased stress in mom can change the way her body responds to pregnancy. This can be especially true if a lifetime of highly stressful events has added up over time.

Health Factors

Families can control part of their risk. Quitting tobacco use before becoming pregnant (or as soon as possible after finding out) and spacing pregnancies are two ways to lower risk.

Community Factors

Even when controlling for other factors, where a mother lives and how much money her family has can influence her likelihood of having a baby that is born too soon.

History

Women who have had a previous preterm birth are more likely to have a preterm baby with subsequent pregnancies.

Infection

Infections in mom's body, including urinary tract infections and sexually transmitted infections, can increase risk of preterm birth.

Unknown

Although these are contributing factors to preterm birth, many causes are still unknown. Further scientific research is needed to truly understand this issue.⁴

¹ Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs. (2007) State Infant Mortality (SIM) Toolkit: A Standardized Approach for Examining Infant Mortality. Retrieved from: [http://www.amchp.org/programsandtopics/data-assessment/InfantMortalityToolkit/Documents/Why Focus on IM.pdf](http://www.amchp.org/programsandtopics/data-assessment/InfantMortalityToolkit/Documents/Why%20Focus%20on%20IM.pdf)

² Oklahoma State Department of Health, Center for Health Statistics, Health Care Information, Vital Statistics 1992 to 2015, on Oklahoma Statistics on Health Available for Everyone (OK2Share). Accessed at <http://www.health.state.ok.us/ok2share>.

³ March of Dimes (2014). Our Campaign to End Premature Birth. St. Louis: Dr. Jennifer House, President. Retrieved from: marchofdimes.org

⁴ Preterm Birth in Cincinnati: Too Many Babies Born Too Soon. (2018) Retrieved from: cradlecincinnati.org

