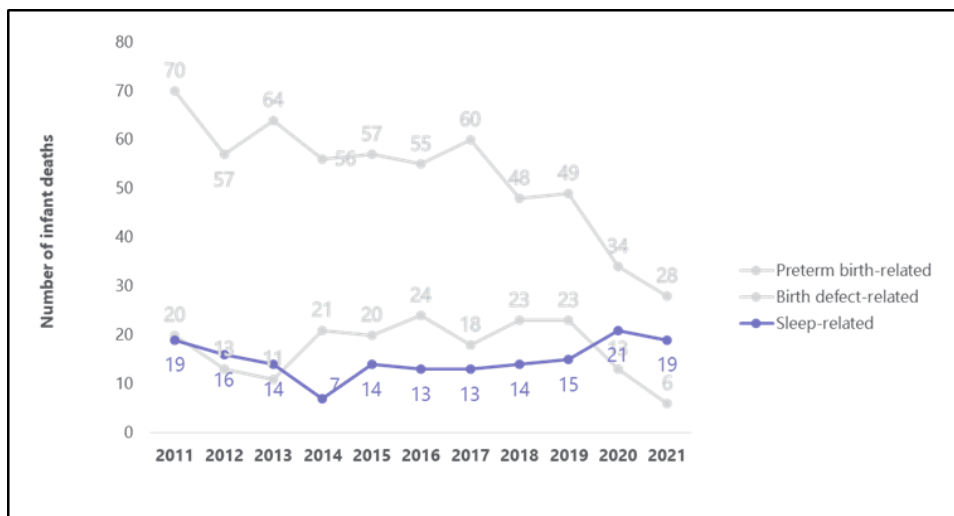


**Safe Sleep is Worth it  
Sleep-Related Infant Death, Hamilton County, Ohio, 2017-2021**

**What is infant mortality?**

Infant mortality is the death of a child before his or her first birthday. In recent years, Hamilton County has experienced a reduction in infant mortality, especially regarding preterm birth-related and birth defect-related deaths. However, as seen in Figure 1, sleep-related infant deaths have remained consistent over the past 11 years.

**Figure 1. Causes of Infant Death, Hamilton County, Ohio 2017-2021**



**What is sleep-related infant death?**

A sleep-related infant death is the death of an infant due to unsafe sleeping environments. Babies sleep safest alone, on their backs, and in their own cribs or bassinets. Unsafe sleeping environments can consist of co-bedding (a parent, adult or older child sharing a sleep surface with an infant), an infant sleeping on a couch, an infant sleeping in a crib filled with blankets or pillows, or an infant being put to sleep on their stomach. In Hamilton County, sleep-related infant deaths remain the second leading cause of infant death for 2020 and 2021.

**What did the data tell us?**

To better understand this trend, Hamilton County Public Health, Cincinnati Health Department, and Cradle Cincinnati reviewed data related to these deaths from 2017-2021. This analysis showed several disparities and risk factors for sleep-related infant deaths. These disparities and risk factors are present at a higher percentage among sleep-related infant deaths when compared to the percentage among all births. Below are key findings from this review.

- Almost 7 of every 10 sleep-related infant deaths were **black babies** (67%).
- Almost 6 of every 10 sleep-related infant deaths involved **co-bedding** (58%).
- Almost 2 of every 10 sleep-related infant deaths occurred to a mom who **smoked anytime** during pregnancy (19%).
- Almost 4 of every 10 sleep-related infant deaths received **less than adequate prenatal care** (42%) <https://www-doh.state.nj.us/doh-shad/query/Kotelchuck.html>
- 6 of every 10 infant sleep-related deaths were to mothers **under the age of 30** (64%).
- In 9 of every 10 sleep-related infant deaths, the infant **does not live beyond 6 months** of age (91%). Over half of all sleep-related infant deaths occurred within the first two months of age.
- Almost 4 of every 10 sleep-related infant deaths were to mothers with a **high school diploma or GED** (36%)

#### **Opportunities for change (Academy of American Pediatrics recommendations):**

- It is recommended that infants sleep in the parents' room, close to the parents' bed, but on a separate surface designed for infants, ideally for at least the first 6 months.
- Avoid smoke and nicotine exposure during pregnancy and after birth.
- It is recommended that pregnant people obtain regular prenatal care. Pregnant people are advised to follow guidelines for the frequency of prenatal visits.
- Culturally appropriate, respectful, and nonjudgmental communication between clinicians and parents is important when discussing safe infant sleep.

#### **Community engagement**

Cradling Cincinnati Infant Mortality Summit- community listening session (September 22, 2022 10 a.m. – 3 p.m.) [bit.ly/cradlingcincy22](https://bit.ly/cradlingcincy22)

October is Safe Sleep Month – a time of year when parents, caregivers and safety advocates come together to focus on one of the key safety issues affecting infants.