

MEASURE

The number of infant deaths per 1,000 live births during the first year of life.

WHY IS THIS INDICATOR IMPORTANT?

Infant mortality is often used as an index of the general health of a community, since many of the risk factors reflect on community issues such as healthcare access, education, and poverty, as well as lifestyle choices and adequacy of prenatal care.

The leading causes of neonatal death (within the first 28 days of life) include birth defects, disorders related to short gestation and/or low birth weight, and pregnancy complications. Prematurity and its complications cause about 20% of neonatal deaths, while birth defects are the cause of about 25% of neonatal deaths.

Post-neonatal death (after 28th day but prior to 1 year of age) reflects events experienced in infancy, including SIDS, birth defects, injuries, and homicide. Birth defects account for approximately 17% of post-neonatal deaths; the rest are likely to stem from preventable causes.

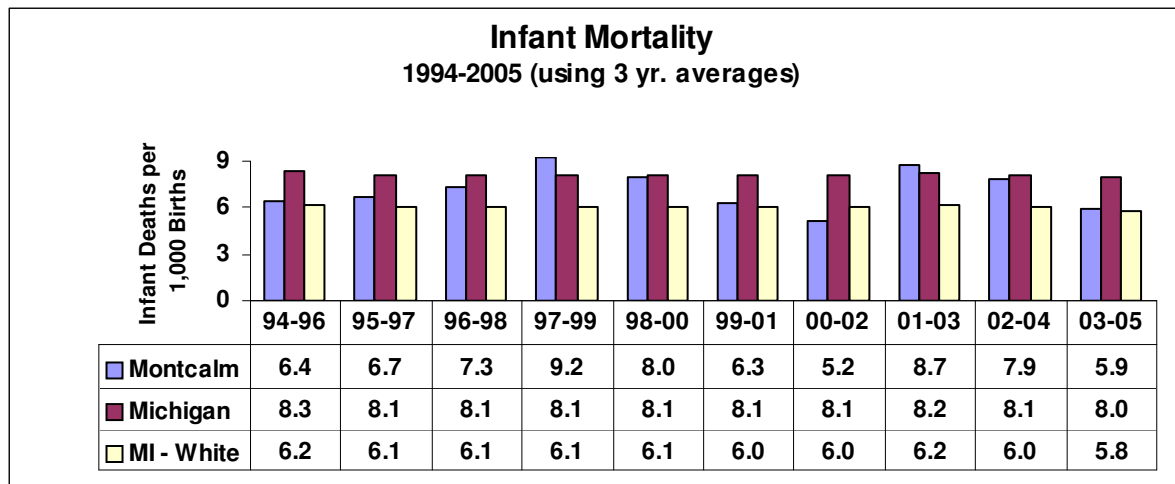
HOW WELL IS THE MONTCALM COMMUNITY DOING?

After seeing steady improvement in infant mortality since the 1970's, the rate in Michigan has changed little since the mid 1990's, hovering around 8 deaths per 1,000 infants. The mortality rate for black infants continues to be more than twice that of white infants in Michigan. To better approximate Montcalm County's population characteristics, the mortality rate for white infants has been included. From the figure below, it can be seen that the Montcalm County infant mortality rate has generally been higher than the Michigan rate for white infants, although generally lower than the overall Michigan rate. The number of infant deaths at the county level can vary considerably from year to year (see table), affecting rates.

GOAL FOR MONTCALM COUNTY

HP2010 has set a goal to reduce infant mortality to no more than 4.5 deaths per 1,000 births, to be achieved by the end of this decade.

Year	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
# of Montcalm County Infant Deaths	3	8	4	4	10	9	1	6	6	10	4	1



NOTE: 3-year moving averages are used in the Infant Mortality chart (left) to better approximate the trend in mortality at the county level.

SOURCE: Michigan Resident Death Files and Michigan Resident Birth Files, 1994–2005. Vital Records and Health Data Development Section, Michigan Department of Community Health.