

NEW HAMPSHIRE PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUE BRIEF: SLEEP-RELATED INFANT DEATHS, 2011-2018



INTRODUCTION

The National Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) support Sudden Unexpected Infant Death (SUID) Monitoring programs in 22 states and jurisdictions that participate in a SUID Case Registry. The data about SUID trends and characteristics inform strategies to reduce future deaths. SUID deaths include infants who died in a sleep-setting from: Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), asphyxiation, suffocation, or those classified as “Undetermined”. Between 2011 and 2018, there were 62 sleep-related infant deaths in New Hampshire to New Hampshire residents, several of which might have been prevented. Fifteen of these 62 deaths were due to SIDS, 42 were “Undetermined”, and 5 were due to Asphyxia. This data brief is meant to provide information on the circumstances surrounding these deaths to learn more about preventing them in the future. *Caution is recommended in generalizing these results as they are from a small number of cases.*

ABOUT THE BABIES

Of the 62 2011-2018 SUID deaths:

- 87% of the infants were white
- 60% of the infants were male
- 58% of the infants were on Medicaid
- 35% of the infants were premature
- 19% of the infants had low birth weight
- Infants’ age: 13 (21%) were less than 1 month, 18 (29%) were 1-2 months, 13 (21%) were 3-4 months, and 16 (26%) were 5 months or older. Two ages were unrecorded (3%).

ABOUT THE BABIES’ CAREGIVERS

Among the 62 sleep-related infant deaths:

- 77% of mothers had a high school or less than high school education
- 76% of mothers were in a low income bracket
- 79% of mothers received regular prenatal care
- 62% of the infants’ mothers smoked during or after pregnancy
- 16% of mothers used alcohol during or after pregnancy
- 71% of mothers breastfed their infant
- 31% of mothers had a history of substance misuse.

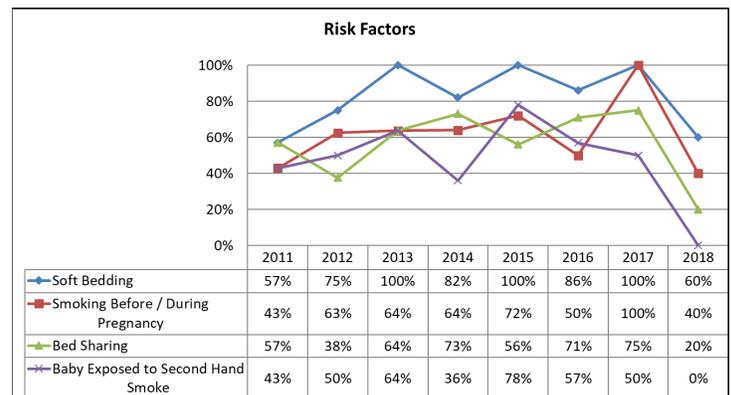
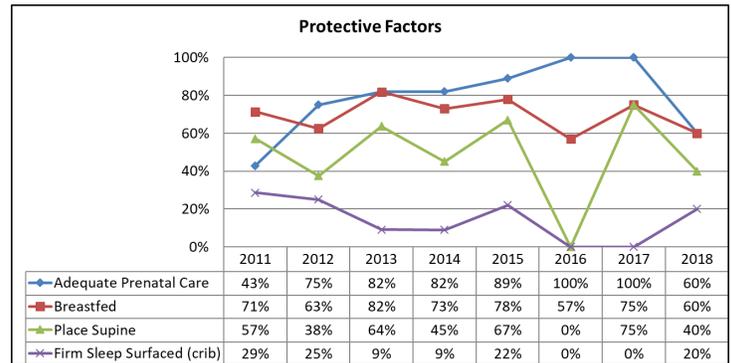
ABOUT THE SLEEP ENVIRONMENTS

- 84% of cases had soft or loose bedding in the sleep setting
- 58% of cases involved sharing a sleep surface with an adult (bed, chair, or couch)
- Despite the recommendation that all infants be placed on their backs to sleep, the New Hampshire SUID Review Group found that only 48% of cases reviewed had been placed on their backs.
- 85% of sleep-related infant deaths occurred among infants found sleeping in a place other than a crib.

PREVENTING SLEEP-RELATED DEATHS

The American Academy of Pediatrics, supported by strong and consistent scientific evidence, recommends that infants are safest room-sharing without bed-sharing. Infants should sleep ALONE, on their BACKS, in a safety-approved crib, bassinette, or portable play area. Put baby on a firm flat mattress without any soft objects or loose bedding, and avoid overheating. Best practices for mothers include avoiding smoke exposure during pregnancy and after birth, getting early and routine prenatal care, and breastfeeding. The New Hampshire Department of Public Health promotes these recommendations to parents, caregivers, and health care professionals.

American Academy of Pediatrics Recommendations Key Findings





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