

4. Infant Mortality

What It Is

Infant mortality measures how many infants die before their first birthday per 1,000 live births.

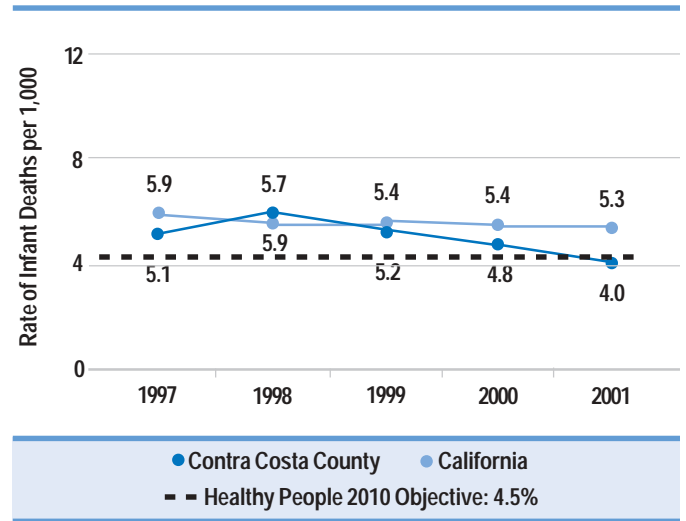
Why It Is Important

Infant mortality is correlated with several factors, including poor prenatal care and low birth weight. Access to prenatal care, and well-baby preventive care after birth, provides opportunities to identify and ameliorate risk factors for infant mortality. The primary causes of infant mortality are pre-existing conditions, birth defects, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), and issues relating to pregnancy and birth, including substance abuse.

How We Are Doing

The infant mortality rate in Contra Costa County has decreased from 5.1 per 1,000 babies in 1997 to 4.0 per 1,000 in 2001, after rising to 5.9 per 1,000 in 1998. Except for 1998, the county's infant mortality rate has been lower than the statewide infant mortality rate, which has decreased steadily from 5.9 per 1,000 in 1997 to 5.3 per 1,000 in 2001. In 2001, for the first time, Contra Costa County met the Healthy People 2010 Objective of an infant mortality rate below 4.5 per 1,000.

Figure 4.1 — Infant Mortality Rate



Source: California Department of Health Services, Center for Health Statistics, Death and Birth Records, 2002.

Note: The Healthy People 2010 Objective is a rate of 4.5 per 1,000 live births.