

The US infant mortality rate fell to an all-time low

NEW YORK (AP) — Infant mortality in the U.S. dropped to a new all-time low in 2025, according to preliminary government data.

There were slightly fewer than 5.4 infant deaths per 1,000 live births in 2025, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

While that appears to be a small decline from about 5.5 in 2024 and 5.6 in the two years preceding, researchers say it is statistically meaningful and translates to hundreds of fewer infant deaths per year.

It's difficult to pinpoint

what's driving the recent developments, but "this is an encouraging data point, and we hope that this trend will continue," said Dr. Michael Warren, chief medical and health officer for the March of Dimes.

Infant mortality is the measure of how many babies die before reaching their first birthday. Because the number of babies born in the U.S. varies year to year, researchers calculate rates to compare infant mortality over time.

The overall numbers, too, have been going down. U.S. infant deaths fell to about 19,350 last year, according

to provisional CDC data that may rise a little as additional analysis is completed. The final tally is still expected to be down from about 20,050 in 2024 and about 20,160 in 2023, according to the agency.

The U.S. rate has inched down over the decades — it was at 7.5 per 1,000 three decades ago — thanks to medical advances and public health efforts.

But it has remained worse than other high-income countries, which experts have attributed to poverty, inadequate prenatal care and other problems. A study published last year

found the U.S. infant mortality rate in 2022 — when the rate rose — was nearly twice as high as what was seen in several other high-income democratic nations, including Italy, Japan, Spain and Sweden.

That was the year of the first statistically significant jump in the U.S. rate in about two decades. Experts attributed that rise to a rebound in RSV and flu infections.

In 2023, U.S. health officials began recommending two new measures to prevent the toll on infants: one was a lab-made antibody shot for infants that helps the immune system fight off the virus, and the other was giving an RSV vaccine to women between 32 weeks and 36 weeks of pregnancy. A March of Dimes expert last year said the effort likely contributed to the

improvement in 2024. Meanwhile, a decline in sudden infant death syndrome could be connected to an increase in education around safe sleeping for infants, Warren said in a statement.

The CDC posted the 2025 provisional data in late May. On Tuesday, the agency released a more in-depth analysis of 2024 infant mortality data, offering details not yet available for 2025. Among that report's highlights:

— Death rates declined both for the youngest infants, less than 28 days old, and for older infants. Those declines continued last year, the 2025 provisional data indicate.

— In 2024, infant mortality continued to differ by race, sometimes

dramatically. Death rates for infants born to Black women were more than twice as high as those for the infants of Hispanic, white and Asian American women.

— Researchers noted a decline in the mortality rate for infants born at full term, at 39 to 40 weeks. But rates did not change significantly for other gestational age groups.

— Mississippi had the highest infant mortality rate, at 9.65 deaths per 1,000 births, and New Hampshire had the lowest, at just under 3 per 1,000.

"These differences are reflective of a variety of reasons related to access to care, community factors, and policies that improve health and outcomes," Warren said.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

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ACROSS

- 1) Guy hiding in children's books
- 6) Helps in a criminal activity
- 11) Jeweler's item
- 14) "Up the creek," is one
- 15) Amend an atlas
- 16) Genetically coded stuff, for short
- 17) Fox and Lloyd went back ...
- 19) Dinghy driver
- 20) Arcing shots
- 21) Sound from a henhouse
- 23) Guts and other innards
- 27) Agents' needs
- 29) Form in the mind
- 30) Did some house work?
- 31) Darlings
- 32) Informative, informally
- 33) Bride's title
- 36) Gets something down
- 37) Musical qualities
- 38) Look good on
- 39) There's no fool like this kind
- 40) Cut off, as relations
- 41) '70s dance hall
- 42) Lumberyard cutter
- 44) Cosmetic application
- 45) Ghostly entities
- 47) Alfa Romeo alternative
- 48) Make more exciting (with "up")
- 49) Jazz combo, often
- 50) "By the time I count to three" follower
- 51) The parolee was back ...
- 58) As to
- 59) Phobias
- 60) Break in two
- 61) Driving-exam curve shape
- 62) Womb resident
- 63) Aden's land

DOWN

- 1) One skilled at repartee
- 2) Fuss, to Shakespeare
- 3) Set fire to
- 4) "How stupid of me!"
- 5) Western and Spanish dishes
- 6) Caribbean resort island
- 7) "All ___ are off!"
- 8) Bird that can't take flight
- 9) Cigarette ingredient
- 10) State in detail
- 11) The elevator provided back ...
- 12) Make it so, legally
- 13) "On your ___, get set ..."
- 18) "Watch out!"
- 22) Superhero creator Stan
- 23) Part of DVD
- 24) Having no drawbacks
- 25) The ones making you slow down are back ...
- 26) Big-ticket items
- 27) Crouch in fear
- 28) L's meaning, sometimes
- 30) Extend, as a subscription
- 32) Spectacular stars
- 34) Xerox competitor
- 35) Bit of gravel
- 37) Class evaluation
- 38) Watches the kids
- 40) "The Jeffersons" was one
- 41) "The Wizard of Oz" character
- 43) "Asp" or "vamp" attachment
- 44) Hi's wife, in comics
- 45) Mountain feature
- 46) Maine flora
- 47) Use a steam iron
- 49) Drive-___
- 52) Wedding announcement word
- 53) Tit-for-___
- 54) "Norma ___" (1979 movie)
- 55) Scary cinematic street
- 56) Time immediately preceding
- 57) "Speed" of many bikes

PAST BEHAVIOR

By Timothy E. Parker

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Millionaire Maker Scratch-Off Delivers Another \$1 Million Top Prize

Eight \$1 Million Top Prizes Remain

JACKSON, MISS. — Another Mississippi Lottery player is celebrating a life-changing win after claiming a \$1 million top prize on the \$30 Millionaire Maker scratch-off game.

The winning ticket was purchased by an Alabaster, Alabama man at Keith's Superstore #89 in Ocean Springs. The winner, who chose to remain anonymous, said purchasing a Millionaire Maker ticket along with Powerball and Mega Millions tickets has become part of a routine stop through Mississippi.

The player said the prize will be shared with family members, honoring an agreement they made long before the winning ticket was ever purchased.

The \$30 Millionaire Maker scratch-off game debuted in January 2026 and has already created one millionaire in the state. Following this latest claim, eight \$1 million top prizes remain.

For more information about Mississippi Lottery games, winning numbers and promotions, visit mslottery.com or download the Mississippi Lottery Official app.

Two Games, Two Players, Two \$100,000 Wins in Five Days

Lightning struck twice for Mississippi Lottery players this week as two separate \$100,000 prizes were won in just five days—one through Powerball and another on a scratch-off ticket.

The first six-figure win came from the Saturday, June 20th Powerball drawing. A ticket purchased at Fast Stop 7 in Laurel matched four out of five white balls plus the Powerball to win \$50,000. Thanks to the \$1 Power Play add-on, that prize doubled to \$100,000. The ticket remains unclaimed, meaning someone in the Laurel area could be carrying around a six-figure surprise.

Then, on Wednesday, June 24, another Mississippi Lottery player stepped forward to claim a \$100,000 top prize on the \$5 Money Bags scratch-off game. The winning ticket was purchased at Keith's Superstore #196 in Poplarville.

The winner described himself as an occasional lottery player and said the purchase was completely unplanned. With an extra \$20 to spare after filling up, the player asked for four \$5 scratch-off tickets. The retailer selected four Money Bags tickets, and a couple scratches later, the routine gas stop turned into a \$100,000 payday.