

Fast facts 2024

red
nose
saving little lives

We are making significant progress towards our goal of zero preventable deaths of babies and children during pregnancy, infancy and early childhood.



12,069
babies saved*



\$18 million
invested in research
to date



80%
reduction in
sudden infant
deaths since 1989*

Every day in
Australia,
6 babies are stillborn
and 2 die within
28 days of birth⁽¹⁾

Types of infant loss

Neonatal Death: death occurring after live birth to 28 days post-delivery.

Infant death: death occurring after live birth up to 1 year of age.

Perinatal death: all neonatal deaths plus all stillbirths.

Stillbirth: death occurring from 20 weeks gestation or with a birth weight of 400g or more. Stillbirth may also include late term abortion after 20 weeks gestation.

- In 2021, there were **315,705** babies born to **311,360** mothers in Australia⁽¹⁾
- There were **3,016** perinatal deaths⁽¹⁾ (less than 1% of babies born)
- Of these deaths, just over **75%** were stillbirths (2,278) and almost **25%** (738) were neonatal deaths⁽¹⁾
- In 2022, there were **958** infant deaths⁽²⁾

Sudden unexpected death in infancy (SUDI) across Australia

What is SUDI & how is it different to SIDS?

SUDI is a broad term used to describe the sudden and unexpected death of an infant for which the cause is not immediately obvious.

SUDI includes deaths from SIDS as well as deaths from other unexpected causes, such as, fatal sleep accidents, drownings and other accidental deaths.

In 2022, there were **117 SUDI deaths across Australia**⁽³⁾.

- **QLD** - 46
- **NSW** - 25
- **VIC** - 16
- **WA** - 15
- **SA** - 8
- **ACT, TAS, NT** - 7

* Estimate uses ABS Causes of Death 2022 data to determine the difference in expected and actual deaths due to Sudden and Unexpected deaths in Infants (SUDI) if the death rate had remained the same as when the campaign was introduced in 1989.

Sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS)

SIDS is defined as the sudden and unexpected death of an infant under one year of age with an onset of a fatal episode occurring during sleep, that remains unexplained after a thorough investigation.

Depending on the state or territory, SIDS is identified by the certifying doctor or coroner as either SIDS or an unknown cause of death. The figures below include both types of data.

In 2022, 106 infant deaths were attributed to either SIDS (15) or an unknown cause of death (91) in Australia⁽³⁾.

- **QLD** - 44
- **Vic** - 14
- **SA** - 7
- **NSW** - 23
- **WA** - 14
- **Other** - 4

Data is not presented for other states or territories due to small counts. Due to differences in certification between states and territories, SIDS deaths include both SIDS and unspecified causes of death. This is different to previous Fast Facts issues which included only SIDS deaths.

Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander infants

In 2022, Indigenous Australian women were almost two times more likely to experience perinatal death than non-Indigenous women^(3,4).

Since 2010, there has been a 22% reduction in the overall infant mortality rate for Indigenous Australian infants.

References

1. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. *Stillbirths and neonatal deaths*. Canberra: AIHW; 2021 [cited 2024 January 9th]. Available from: <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/mothers-babies/stillbirths-and-neonatal-deaths>.
2. Australian Bureau of Statistics. *Deaths, Australia*. Canberra: ABS; 2022 [cited 2024 January 9th] Available from: <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/population/deaths-australia/latest-release>.
3. Australian Bureau of Statistics. *Causes of Death, Australia*. Canberra: ABS; 2022 [cited 2023 October 4th]. Available from: <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/health/causes-death/causes-death-australia/latest-release>.
4. Australian Bureau of Statistics. *Births, Australia*. Canberra: ABS; 2022 [cited 2023 October 19th]. Available from: <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/population/births-australia/2022>