

According to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child:

Article.6. Children have the right to live and thrive.

Article.24. Children have the right to the highest attainable standard of health.

Article. 24.2.e. Governments must provide caregivers with the information they need to keep children healthy and safe.

Article. 27. When needed, governments must provide material support to caregivers to ensure children have a standard of living adequate for physical development.

For answers to any questions you have about the report, contact us:

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Report Summary

Safe and Sound

A Special Report on the Unexpected Sleep-Related Deaths of 145 Manitoba Infants



All infants have the right to live and thrive.

Report Summary

From January 2009 to December 2018, **145 infants** died in unsafe sleeping environments.

Purpose

To increase the effectiveness and responsiveness of services for infants and their families in order to reduce infant mortality and enhance safety.

Methods

The deaths of all infants between 2009 and 2018 were reviewed to identify sleep-related deaths. Once identified, data were collected from administrative records and analyzed. Consultations with experts informed the recommendations.

What are the top risk factors in Manitoba?

77%

of infants were sleeping on an unsafe surface like an adult mattress or couch

48%

of infants had indicators of overheating including perspiration and/or overswaddling

50%

of infants were bed-sharing (sleeping on the same surface as another person)

50%

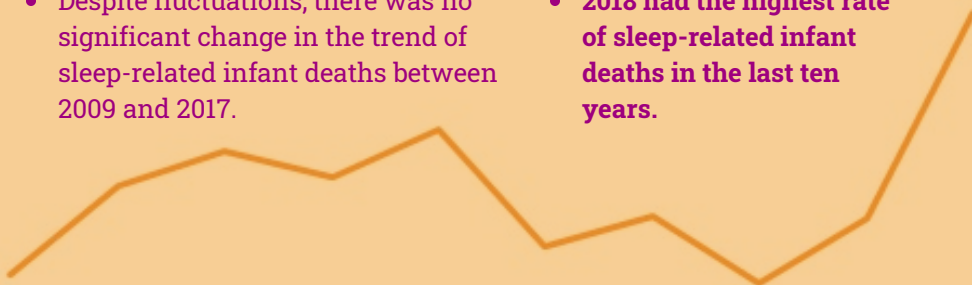
of infants were exposed to tobacco smoke either before or after birth

80% had soft objects in their sleeping environments (blankets, pillows and toys)

Are sleep-related infant deaths increasing?

- Despite fluctuations, there was no significant change in the trend of sleep-related infant deaths between 2009 and 2017.

- 2018 had the highest rate of sleep-related infant deaths in the last ten years.**



Key Findings

- One in four infants** who died did not have a crib or other safe sleep surface in their home. Many of the families that experienced the loss of an infant were living in poverty.
- Caregivers often get confusing and conflicting information** about safe sleep practices from service providers. Public education materials in Manitoba should be improved to meet best-practice standards.
- Key risk factors are not measured consistently.** There is no current process to monitor sleep-related infant deaths in Manitoba.
- Caregivers interact with multiple systems** that have the responsibility and opportunity to provide resources and support, this includes the public health, child welfare, and social assistance systems.

Key Recommendations

Thirteen recommendations were made by the Manitoba Advocate to the Government of Manitoba and Government of Canada, including:

1. An action plan to distribute safe sleep surfaces (cribs, bassinets, or culturally appropriate safe alternatives) to caregivers that are unable to afford them.
2. A new and culturally appropriate public education campaign to communicate the risk factors associated with sleep-related infant deaths.
3. An accredited training program on safe infant sleep practices for health, child welfare, and early childhood education professionals.
4. A new data collection form and database to monitor the number and risk factors associated with sleep-related infant deaths.
5. Provincial child welfare standards that support caregivers by identifying safe sleeping needs, providing information and distributing safe sleep surfaces to ensure safety.

"This report presents a message of hope: sleep-related infant deaths can be reduced by addressing the known risk factors."

- Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth