

RISK FACTORS

Past research suggests among all of the variables available on birth/death certificate records, the following key risk factors are related to SIDS: ¹²⁻¹⁴

Child Factors

- Prone infant sleep position*
- Age (1-3 months)
- Preterm birth
- Low birth weight (<2500g)

Maternal Factors

- Tobacco use during pregnancy
- Alcohol use during pregnancy
- Inadequate prenatal care
- Age (<20 years)
- Less than 12 years of education
- Unmarried at time of birth

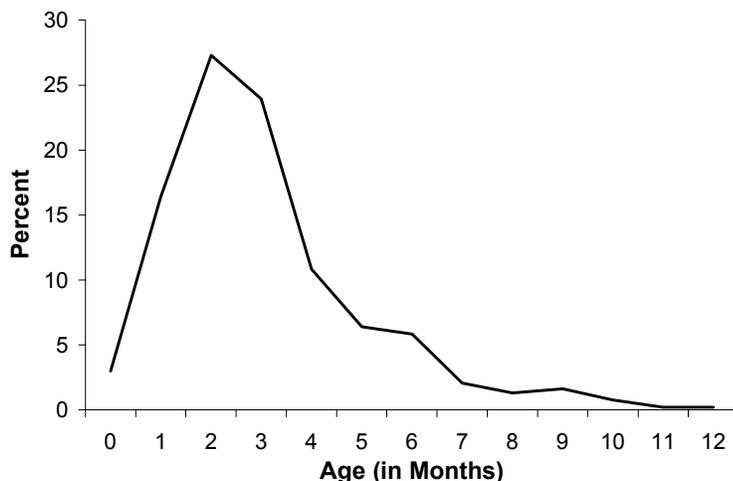
*Note: Information on sleep position in Tennessee was not available for this report.

These risk factors do not imply causation, and not all individuals with a given risk factor will have a child with SIDS. Risk factors can either be causal or function as markers for other more proximate causes. For example, many risk factors such as low maternal education do not “cause” SIDS. Rather, these risk factors identify certain subgroups of the population at increased risk for SIDS. Preventive interventions can then be directed towards these high-risk groups.

In order to understand the impact of these risk factors on SIDS in Tennessee, it is important to examine trends in the prevalence of each of these risk factors. By monitoring these risk factors and their relationships with SIDS rates, we can better target prevention efforts in Tennessee.

age of infant and SIDS...

**SIDS Deaths by Age of Death
Tennessee, 1990-1998**



Infant Age at Death

- Consistent with prior research and national rates, SIDS deaths were highest at the end of the 2nd month
- 68% of SIDS deaths in TN occurred between 1-3 months of age