



## Knox County Health Department

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### **KCHD's Service Spotlight: Keeping Babies Safe**

*This week's spotlight highlights KCHD's Strong Baby and Safe Sleep Projects*

*Knoxville, Tenn.*—The Knox County Health Department (KCHD) Strong Baby and Safe Sleep projects promote healthier families and infants by providing education and resources to parents. Both projects are an outcome of the Fetal Infant Mortality Review (FIMR) Program. Through its review of fetal and infant deaths ranging from premature births to Sudden Unexpected Infant Death (SUID), FIMR works at the community level to formulate programs and influence policy that will lead to improving birth outcomes and decrease preventable infant deaths.

Prematurity and birth defects are some of the leading causes of infant death. In 2019, 10.3% of births in Knox County were premature. While some causes of infant loss and prematurity are preventable, others are not or the cause is unknown. While not all pregnancy complications can be prevented, women can increase their chances of having a healthy baby by managing health conditions and detecting problems early.

One project focused on improving birth outcomes and reducing infant mortality rates in Knox County is KCHD's Strong Baby project. Strong Baby rallies the community around the importance of implementing regular practices that lead to healthier infants and families. The educational campaign focuses on the importance of early and adequate prenatal care, breastfeeding, good nutrition, avoiding tobacco, and many other healthy activities. For more information about the Strong Baby project, visit KCHD's [Strong Baby page](#) on our website.

"Engaging the community by partnering with local families to promote maternal and child health in Knox County has allowed a broader conversation around this critical topic," said KCHD Senior Director and Public Health Officer Dr. Martha Buchanan. "Preventing injury and illness is central to our public health mission, and there's no better way to improve community health than by starting at birth."

Part of being a Strong Baby is practicing safe sleep. Informing expectant and new mothers the ABC's of safe sleep is vital to reducing preventable infant deaths. According to the Tennessee Department of Health, the main contributors to sleep-related deaths in Tennessee are: Baby not sleeping in a crib or bassinet (74% of deaths), infant sharing a sleep space with other people (58% of deaths), and infant not sleeping on back (50%). Ensuring that all babies are placed Alone, on their Backs and in a Crib is one small step that can be taken to ensure infants sleep safely.

### **About Knox County Health Department**

The first health department in Tennessee to achieve national voluntary accreditation by the Public Health Accreditation Board, the Knox County Health Department (KCHD) is dedicated to ensuring the conditions in which every resident can be healthy. As a chief health strategist for the community and with more than 240 team members, KCHD's broad scope of work includes convening partners to improve community health, identifying community health threats, investigating disease outbreaks, conducting extensive outreach and education, preparing for public health emergencies, providing and connecting the public with medical care, enforcing food safety and air quality laws, and more. For more information, visit [www.knoxcounty.org/health](http://www.knoxcounty.org/health).

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