

# U.S. infant mortality high for West

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The United States has one of the highest rates of infant mortality in the industrialized world, with sub-Saharan African countries among the worst overall.

The report issued Tuesday by the Save the Children organization said U.S. newborn death rates are highest among minorities, even when mothers have early and equal access to prenatal care.

The odds of newborn infants dying, after all other risk factors were taken into account, were 3.4 times higher in blacks, 1.5 times higher in Hispanics and 1.9 times higher for races other than whites.

In the developing world, about half of newborn deaths are due to infection, tetanus and diarrhea, the report said. In the industrialized world, these problems are almost non-existent and newborn deaths are most likely to result from babies being born too small or too early.

Of the 125 countries listed, Sweden ranked first, or safest, followed by Denmark, Finland, Austria, Germany, Norway, Australia, Netherlands, Canada, United States and Britain.

The west African state of Niger is at the bottom, with nine other African countries filling the 10 last positions.

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