

# Sudden Unexplained Death in Childhood



**SUDC**  
FOUNDATION

## What is Sudden Unexplained Death in Childhood?

Sudden Unexplained Death in Childhood (SUDC) is a category of death in children between the ages of 1 and 18 years that remains unexplained after a thorough investigation, including an autopsy. Most often, SUDC occurs in seemingly healthy children during sleep. By definition, we do not know what causes SUDC, and we do not know how to predict or prevent it.

## SUDC Facts

SUDC is believed to be rare; occurring in about one in every 100,000 children. We do not know exactly how widespread SUDC is. The World Health Organization (WHO) does not have a specific code for sudden, unexplained deaths in children over 364 days old when a comprehensive investigation has taken place. At this time, we must estimate SUDC deaths by examining the statistics of deaths with “undetermined” causes (R99).

Every year, in the United States, at least 400 children are lost to undetermined causes. It is most common in young children and is the fifth leading cause of death among children ages 1 to 4 years.

## The SUDC Foundation

The SUDC Foundation envisions a world where no more children are lost to Sudden Unexplained Death in Childhood. The SUDC Foundation is the only organization worldwide whose purpose is to promote awareness, advocate for research and support those affected by SUDC.

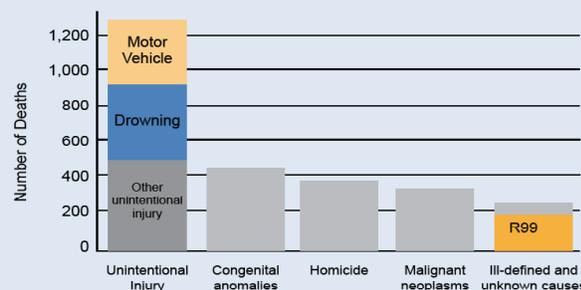
### The SUDC Foundation:

- ★ **Funds and promotes research.** The SUDC Foundation provides grants for and conducts research that will further our understanding of the cause(s) and ways to prevent SUDC.
- ★ **Assists Medical Professionals.** The Foundation provides resources to help medical examiners and coroners, pediatricians and other doctors care for and communicate with families experiencing the sudden, unexpected and unexplained loss of a child.
- ★ **Supports Families.** The SUDC Foundation provides personalized, comprehensive care from licensed clinical social workers and cultivates a community of support for bereaved families. The Foundation also helps families navigate the investigation into their child’s death by being a liaison between families and the medical examiner or coroner. It assists families in accessing research and DNA banking services which could lead to answers on what may have happened to their child.
- ★ **Advocates for the SUDC community.** The Foundation supports efforts, including legislative, to ensure comprehensive and standardized death investigations. It also advocates for fair treatment of and appropriate medical care for families and thorough data collection to improve our understanding of SUDC.

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in 2016, SUDC affected:

- 236 children ages of 1-4 years;
- 30 children ages of 5-9 years;
- 37 children ages of 10-14 years; and
- 142 teens ages of 15-19 years.

### Leading causes of death ages 1-4: US 2016



Source: CDC, National Vital Statistics System, 2016

*The SUDC Foundation provides all services at no cost to the people it serves.*

To learn more, please visit [SUDC.org](http://SUDC.org).  
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