**Sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS)** is defined as the sudden death of an infant younger than 1 year old that remains unexplained after a complete postmortem examination, including an investigation of the death scene and a review of the case history. Since 1994, the incidence of SIDS in the United States has decreased due to the Safe to Sleep campaign (formerly known as the Back to Sleep campaign).\* SIDS is the third leading cause of infant deaths (birth to 12 months old) and the leading cause of postneonatal deaths (between 1 and 12 months old). SIDS claimed the lives of 2063 infants in the United States in 2010, a 4% decrease from 2009 (Murphy, Xu, and Kochanek, 2013). Despite dramatic decreases in SIDS rates, rates for African-American, American Indian, and Alaskan Native infants remains disproportionately higher than for the rest of the population. In 2007, SIDS rates were 2.4 times higher for American Indian mothers and 1.9 times higher for African-American mothers in comparison to non-Hispanic white mothers (Mathews and MacDorman, 2011). It is also important to note that the percentage of infants born preterm (<37 weeks) was significantly higher (18.5%) in African-American women than in white women (11.7%) (MacDorman and Mathews, 2011). Preterm births rank second as cause of infant death; this trend has been constant since the mid-1990s, when the rates of SIDS deaths significantly decreased in the United States.

The SIDS rate remained fairly static since 2001. This has been attributed to determination of non-SIDS causes of postneonatal mortality, such as suffocation and asphyxia (Moon and Fu, 2012). Table 10-2 summarizes the major epidemiologic characteristics of SIDS.

**TABLE 10-2 Epidemiology of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome** 

Factor	Occurrence
Incidence	55.4 per 100,000 live births (2008)*
Peak age	2 to 3 months old; 90% occur by 6 months old; preterm infants die from sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) at mean age of 6 weeks later than mean age of
	death from SIDS for term infants
Gender	Higher percentage of boys affected
Time of death	During sleep
Time of year	Increased incidence in winter
Racial	Greater incidence in African Americans and American Indians (see Sudden Infant Death Syndrome in this chapter)
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