

Preterm (premature) infant: An infant born before completion of 37 weeks of gestation regardless of birth weight

Full-term infant: An infant born between the beginning of the 38 weeks and the completion of the 42 weeks of gestation regardless of birth weight

Late-preterm infant: An infant born between 34⁰/₇ and 36⁰/₇ weeks of gestation regardless of birth weight

Postterm (postmature) infant: An infant born after 42 weeks of gestational age regardless of birth weight

Classification According to Mortality

Live birth: Birth in which the neonate manifests any heartbeat, breathes, or displays voluntary movement regardless of gestational age

Fetal death: Death of the fetus after 20 weeks of gestation and before delivery with absence of any signs of life after birth

Neonatal death: Death that occurs in the first 27 days of life; early neonatal death occurs in the first week of life; late neonatal death occurs at 7 to 27 days

Perinatal mortality: Total number of fetal and early neonatal deaths per 1000 live births

Formerly, weight at birth was considered to reflect a reasonably accurate estimation of gestational age; that is, if an infant's birth weight exceeded 2500 g (5.5 pounds), the infant was considered to be mature. However, accumulated data have shown that intrauterine growth rates are not the same for all infants and that other factors (e.g., heredity, placental insufficiency, maternal disease) influence intrauterine growth and birth weight. From these data, a more definitive and meaningful classification system that encompasses birth weight, gestational age, and neonatal outcome has been developed. (See [Fig. 8-2](#) for size comparison of newborn infants.)