

Unintentional Injuries, Violence, and the Health of Young People

Division of Adolescent and School Health (DASH), National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (NCCDPHP), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

Unintentional Injuries and Violence

Injuries include unintentional injuries (such as those caused by motor vehicle crashes and fires) and intentional injuries (violence and suicide).

- An injury is defined as "unintentional or intentional damage to the body resulting from acute exposure to thermal, mechanical, electrical, or chemical energy or from the absence of such essentials as heat or oxygen".¹
- Injuries are not accidents. They can be prevented by changing the environment, individual behavior, products, social norms, legislation, and governmental and institutional policy.
- Injuries are the leading cause of death and disability for people aged 1 to 34 years in the United States.²
- Injuries requiring medical attention, or resulting in restricted activity, affect more than 20 million children and adolescents (250 per 1,000 persons) and cost \$17 billion annually for medical treatment.³
- Violence is the "threatened or actual use of physical force or power against another person, against one self, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, or deprivation."⁴

Leading Causes of Injury Mortality and Morbidity Among Children and Adolescents

- Approximately 67% of all deaths among children and adolescents aged 5-19 years result from injury-related causes: 48% from motor vehicle injuries (occupants and pedestrians combined), 21% from all other unintentional injuries, 16% from homicides, and 14% from suicides.⁵

Five Leading Causes of Death and Number of Deaths United States, 2005, Ages 5-19

Rank	Ages 5-9	Ages 10-14	Ages 15-19
1	Unintentional Injury 1,072	Unintentional Injury 1,343	Unintentional Injury 6,616
2	Malignant Neoplasms 485	Malignant Neoplasms 515	Homicide 2,076
3	Congenital Anomalies 196	Suicide 270	Suicide 1,613
4	Homicide 121	Homicide 220	Malignant Neoplasms 731
5	Heart Disease 106	Congenital Anomalies 200	Heart Disease 389

Source: WISQARS⁵

Motor Vehicle-Related Injuries

- Among children and adolescents aged 5 to 19 years, 68% of unintentional injury deaths are due to motor vehicle crashes.⁵
- Traffic-related injuries also include those sustained while walking, riding a bicycle, or riding a motorcycle. In 2005, 29% of motor vehicle-related deaths were bicyclists.⁶



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

NOVEMBER 2008



Violence

- In the United States, minority males bear most of the burden of homicide victimization. In 2005, among males aged 15 to 19 years, the homicide rate was 3.5 per 100,000 among white non-Hispanics; 8.0 per 100,000 among Asian/Pacific Islanders; 15.4 per 100,000* among American Indian/Alaskan Natives; 27.9 per 100,000 among Hispanics; and 62.1 per 100,000 among Blacks.⁵
- In 2007, 15% of high school students seriously considered attempting suicide, and 11% made a plan about how they would attempt suicide during the 12 months preceding the survey.⁶
- The United States child homicide rate, 2.6 per 100,000 for children less than 15 years of age, is five times greater than the combined rate of 25 other industrialized countries.⁷
- An estimated 302,100 women and 92,700 men are forcibly raped each year in the United States. More than half (54%) of the female rape victims were less than 18 years of age, and 22% were less than 12 years of age when they were first raped.⁸

*Total number of deaths = 20. Rates based upon 20 or fewer deaths may be unstable. Use with caution.

Five Leading Causes of Injury Death and Number of Injury Deaths United States, 2005, Ages 5-19⁵

Rank	Ages 5-9	Ages 10-14	Ages 15-19
1	Unintentional Motor Vehicle Traffic 560	Unintentional Motor Vehicle Traffic 763	Unintentional Motor Vehicle Traffic 4,829
2	Unintentional Fire/Burn 138	Suicide/Suffocation 172	Homicide Firearm 1,742
3	Unintentional Drowning 121	Homicide Firearm 143	Suicide Firearm 738
4	Unintentional Other Land Transport 47	Unintentional Drowning 132	Suicide/Suffocation 644
5	Homicide-Firearm/Unintentional Suffocation 44/44	Unintentional Fire/Burn 85	Unintentional Poisoning 637

Context of Injury Occurrence

- Approximately 4 million children and adolescents are injured at school each year.³
- More than 1 million serious sports-related injuries occur each year to adolescents aged 10-17 years.⁹
- In 2005, firearms were the mechanism of injury in approximately 84% of homicides and 46% of suicides among children and adolescents aged 5-19 years.⁵
- From 1997 to 2002, 9,622 child passengers aged 0 to 14 years died in motor vehicle crashes. Of these children, 2,335 (24%) were killed in crashes involving drinking drivers, and 68% of the deaths occurred while the child was riding with the drinking driver.¹⁰

References

1. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Healthy People 2010. 2nd ed. 2 vols. Washington, DC:U.S. Government Printing Office, 2000.
2. Minino AM, Anderson RN, Fingerhut LA, Boudreault MA, Warner M. Deaths: Injuries, 2002. *National Vital Statistics Reports*; 54(10):1-125.
3. Danseco ER, Miller TR, Spicer RS. Incidence and costs of 1987-1994 childhood injuries: demographic breakdowns. *Pediatrics* 2000;105(2).
4. Foege WH, Rosenberg ML, Mercy JA. Public health and violence prevention. *Current Issues in Public Health* 1995;1:2-9.
5. CDC, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Office of Statistics and Programming. Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS). Online at <http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/wisqars/>. Accessed October 8, 2008.
6. CDC. Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance - United States, 2007 *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* 2008;57(SS-4):1-131.
7. CDC. Rates of homicide, suicide, and firearm related deaths among children—26 industrialized countries. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* 1997;46:101-5.
8. Tjaden P, Thoennes N. Full report of the prevalence, incidence, and consequences of violence against women: Findings from the National Violence Against Women Survey. Report for grant 93-IJ-CX-0012, funded by the National Institute of Justice and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Washington (DC): National Institute of Justice; 2000.
9. Bijur PE, Trumble A, Harel Y, Overpeck MD, Jones D, Scheidt PC. Sports and recreation injuries in US children and adolescents. *Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine* 1995; 149:1009-16.
10. Shults RA. Child passenger deaths involving drinking drivers--United States, 1997-2002. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* 2004;53(4):77-79.

For Additional Information Contact:

DASH, NCCDPHP, CDC
 4770 Buford Highway, NE (Mail Stop K-12), Atlanta, GA 30341-3717
 800-CDC-INFO
 E-mail: CDC-INFO@cdc.gov