

# Unintentional Injury



## Risk Factors:

### • Age

Unintentional injuries are the leading cause of death among those between 1-44 years old.

### • Race/Ethnicity

American Indians/Alaska Natives are more likely to die from an unintentional injury compared to any other racial or ethnic group.

### • Gender

Males were more likely to be hospitalized from and unintentional injury compared to females.

### • Socioeconomic Status (SES)

Children and adolescents from low SES families may be more susceptible to unintentional injuries.

### • Substance Abuse

Excessive alcohol and drug use increases risk of unintentional injuries.

### • Physical Inactivity

A person's musculoskeletal health decreases with physical inactivity which increases the risk of falls.

Unintentional injuries are injuries that are not caused on purpose and are free from harmful intent. They occur in the form of falls, poisonings/overdoses, motor vehicle crashes, fires/burns, cuts/piercing, drowning/submersion, and by being struck/against an object.

Unintentional injuries can vary in nature (e.g., internal injury, fracture, open wound, burn) and can affect different bodily regions (e.g., torso, upper or lower extremities).

## Facts

- In 2019, unintentional injuries were the third leading cause of death in the United States.
- Over 24.8 million cases of non-fatal unintentional injuries occurred in 2019.
- In 2019, the leading causes of death among unintentional injuries were drug poisoning (35.9%), falls (22.8%), motor vehicle (MV) traffic (21.7%).

For more information and data go to [www.SDHealthStatistics.com](http://www.SDHealthStatistics.com)  
Community Health Statistics Unit:  
619-692-6667

## Common Unintentional Injuries include:

- Falls
- Drug and Non-Drug Poisoning
- Motor-Vehicle Accidents
- Overexertion
- Suffocation/Inhalation
- Drowning/Submersion

## Prevention

- **Engage in physical activity**  
Improves musculoskeletal health and prevents falls.
- **Avoid impaired and/or distracted driving**  
Alcohol, prescription/over-the-counter medication, and other illicit drugs impair driving.
- **Adhere to proper medication dosage**
- **Adjust living and work settings**  
Remove tripping hazards and opt for non-slip materials.

## Resources

San Diego Trauma Research & Education Foundation

[www.tref.org](http://www.tref.org)

Injury Prevention & Control Programs and Activities

[www.cdc.gov/injury](http://www.cdc.gov/injury)

