



Saving Lives and  
Protecting People from

# Injuries and Violence

## Injury and Violence: Important Public Health Issues

We all know someone whose life has been affected by injury or violence: A child who was killed in a car crash. A friend who lost a loved one to suicide. An older relative who fell and fractured a hip.

Injuries and violence affect *everyone*, regardless of age, race, or economic status. For Americans 1 to 44 years of age, injuries are the number-one killer. In fact, people in that age group are more likely to die from an injury—such as a motor vehicle crash, fall, or homicide—than from any other cause, including cancer, HIV, or the flu.

## Prevention Saves Lives

Injuries are so common that we often accept them as just part of life. But injuries are not accidents. Injuries can be prevented and their consequences can be reduced. We know prevention works. For example:

- Seat belts have saved an estimated 255,000 lives between 1975 and 2008.<sup>1</sup>
- School-based programs to prevent violence have cut violent behavior among high school students by 29%.<sup>2</sup>
- Sobriety checkpoints have been shown to cut alcohol-related crashes and deaths by about 20%.<sup>3</sup>
- Tai chi and other exercise programs for older adults have been shown to reduce falls by as much as half among participants.<sup>4</sup>

## CDC's National Center for Injury Prevention and Control

CDC's National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (Injury Center) is committed to saving lives and protecting our nation from injuries and violence. The Injury Center is the only U.S. federal agency that deals exclusively with injury and violence prevention in non-occupational settings. It leads a coordinated public health approach to tackling this critical health and safety issue. The Center's work is guided by the belief that everyone should have access to the best information and resources to help them live life to its fullest potential.

## IN THE UNITED STATES



More than 180,000 people die from injuries each year—**1 person every 3 minutes**.<sup>5</sup>



Injuries are the **leading cause of death** for people ages 1–44.<sup>5</sup>



Injuries cost more than **\$406 billion** annually in medical care and lost productivity.<sup>6</sup>

National Center for Injury Prevention and Control



## Putting Science into Action to Prevent Injuries and Violence

The following examples offer a glimpse of the depth and breadth of the Injury Center's activities and programs:

### Identifying and Monitoring the Injury Problem

The Injury Center develops and uses cutting-edge data systems to track injuries and deaths by age, race, and a host of other factors. These powerful tools ensure that prevention initiatives are guided by the best available science and research. By studying patterns in data, the Injury Center can better understand the nature and scope of an injury or violence problem, measure how well prevention efforts are working, and identify emerging issues. Through the National Violent Death Reporting System, for instance, the Center gathers, shares, and links comprehensive state-level data on violent deaths.

### Conducting Research to Guide Decision Making

The Injury Center conducts and funds a wide range of research that provides vital knowledge about what works in injury and violence prevention. This knowledge informs decision making about programs and policies to reduce injuries and violence, facilitating wise investments of prevention resources. For example, Injury Center research showed that state 0.08% BAC (blood alcohol concentration) laws effectively reduced alcohol-related traffic deaths.<sup>7</sup> This finding served as a foundation for tying federal highway funds to 0.08% BAC laws.

### Empowering States Through Funding and Technical Assistance

The Injury Center provides critical funding and technical assistance to states through its Core Violence and Injury Prevention Program. The program strengthens states' capacity to collect and use data to better understand the local injury environment and challenges, plan injury prevention and control efforts, and carry out and evaluate potentially life-saving interventions for their residents. Additionally, through the Rape Prevention and Education Program, the Center provides funding to strengthen sexual violence prevention efforts in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and six U.S. territories.

### Building Effective Partnerships for Prevention

Injury and violence prevention takes coordinated efforts across agencies, organizations, and sectors. The Injury Center works with a variety of partners—from local health departments to national corporations—to make people safer where they live, play, work, and learn. For example, a successful partnership with the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) helps raise awareness of concussions and improve prevention and treatment of these traumatic brain injuries.

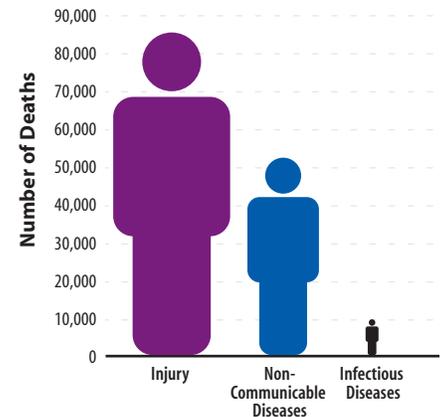
### Building Awareness Through Communication and Education

The Injury Center uses innovative communication campaigns, trainings, and program materials to educate and engage states, health care providers, policy makers, public health practitioners, and the public to advance prevention initiatives and promote policies that save lives. For example, through CDC's *Vital Signs* program, the Injury Center spotlights issues such as prescription painkiller overdoses, alcohol-impaired driving, and seat belt use to raise awareness about the problem and promote proven solutions.

### Preventing Injuries and Violence Globally

Injury and violence are worldwide problems. The Injury Center collaborates with partners and governments around the world, sharing vital lessons learned that can be put to work abroad. In India, Colombia, and Iraq, for example, the Injury Center is helping to build more effective trauma care programs to improve care for the injured.

More people ages 1–44 die from injuries than from any other cause, including cancer, HIV, or the flu.<sup>5</sup>



## CDC's Commitment to Prevention

CDC's Injury Center is committed to continuing its work to prevent injuries and violence. Prevention is the most effective, common-sense way to improve health and lower societal costs of medical care and loss of work related to injuries and violence. Our priority is to equip states, local communities, and partner organizations with the best science, tools, and resources so that they can take effective action to save lives and protect people from injuries and violence.

**Join us in making injury and violence prevention the premiere public health achievement of the next decade!**

**To learn more about CDC's Injury Center, and the tools listed in this fact sheet, visit [www.cdc.gov/injury](http://www.cdc.gov/injury).**

