

Mortality Risk

ODDS OF DYING FROM ACCIDENTAL INJURIES

The chart below shows the likelihood, or odds, of dying as a result of a specific type of accident. The odds of dying over a one-year period are based on the U.S. population as a whole, not on participants in any particular activity or on how dangerous that activity may be. For example, more people are killed in auto accidents than in motorcycle accidents or airplane crashes, not because riding a motorcycle or traveling in an airplane is more or less dangerous, but because far more people travel by car. Drug poisoning is the leading cause of injury death in the United States. The lifetime chances of dying from a drug or medication overdose were one in 96 in 2014, compared with about 1 in 645 in a car accident and 1 in 161,856 for fatal injuries caused by lightning.

ODDS OF DEATH IN THE UNITED STATES BY SELECTED CAUSE OF INJURY, 2013 (1)

Cause of death	Number of deaths, 2013	One-year odds
All motor vehicle accidents	35,369	
Car occupants	6,625	
Motorcycle riders	4,230	
Assault by firearm	11,207	
Exposure to smoke, fire and flames	2,760	
Fall on and from stairs and steps	2,233	
Drowning and submersion while in or falling into swimming pool	651	
Firearms discharge (accidental)	505	
Fall on and from ladder or scaffolding	420	
Air and space transport accidents	412	
Cataclysmic storm (2)	63	5
Flood	42	7
Bitten or struck by dog	35	9
Earthquake and other earth movements	34	9
Lightning	23	13

(1) Based on fatalities and life expectancy in 2013. Ranked by deaths in 2013.

(2) Includes hurricanes, tornadoes, blizzards, dust storms and other cataclysmic storms.

Source: National Center for Health Statistics; National Safety Council.

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HEALTH RISKS

Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States, accounting for 614,000 fatalities in 2014, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Influenza and pneumonia ranked eighth in 2014, accounting for some 55,000 fatalities. However, pandemic influenza viruses have the potential to be far more deadly. An estimated 675,000 Americans died during the 1918 Spanish influenza pandemic, the deadliest and most infectious known influenza strain to date.

Top 15 Major Causes of Death, 2014

Rank	Cause of death	Number of deaths	Age-adjusted death rate (1)	
			Rate	Percent change from 2013
1	Heart disease	614,348	167.0	
2	Malignant neoplasms (tumors)	591,699	161.2	
3	Chronic lower respiratory diseases	147,101	40.5	
4	Accidents (unintentional injuries)	136,053	40.5	
5	Cerebrovascular diseases (stroke)	133,103	36.5	
6	Alzheimer's disease	93,541	25.4	
7	Diabetes	76,488	20.9	
8	Influenza and pneumonia	55,227	15.1	
9	Kidney disease	48,146	13.2	
10	Intentional self-harm (suicide)	42,773	13.0	
11	Septicemia	38,940	10.7	
12	Chronic liver disease and cirrhosis	38,170	10.4	
13	Hypertension (3)	30,221	8.2	
14	Parkinson's disease	26,150	7.4	
15	Pneumonitis due to solids and liquids	18,792	5.1	
	All deaths	2,626,418	724.6	

(1) Per 100,000 population; factors out differences based on age.

(2) Less than 0.1 percent.

(3) Essential (primary) hypertension and hypertensive renal disease.

Source: National Center for Health Statistics.

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