

# Why Injury Prevention Deserves the Spotlight



## Scale of the Problem

- In 2023, almost **223,000 deaths** occurred in the US due to preventable (unintentional or accidental) injuries, at a rate **95% higher than in 1992**.
- Intentional injuries and violence add another **73,000 deaths** per year.
- **Every two minutes** a preventable injury-related death occurs in the US.
- Even more staggering, about **62 million Americans** seek medical care for an injury each year.

## Leading Causes & Trends

### Preventable injuries (top killers)

- Preventable injuries are the **#1 cause of death for Americans ages 1-44**
- **Poisoning (largely overdoses)** is now the leading cause of preventable injury-related death, responsible for 45% of those deaths in 2023.
- **Falls** are the #2 cause and now lead nonfatal injury visits (8.8 million+ ED treatments in 2023).
- **Motor vehicle crashes** remain persistently in the top three for both fatal and nonfatal injuries.

### Intentional injuries and firearms

- In 2023, there were over **49,000 suicides** (16% of all injury deaths) and almost 23,000 homicides (7.5%).
- In 2022, the U.S. recorded over **48,000 firearm-related deaths**; more than twice as many individuals sustained nonfatal firearm injuries in that year.
- Over 70% of medically treated firearm injuries are assaults; nearly 20% are unintentional.
- Firearm injury is among the top five causes of death for ages 1–44, and the leading cause for ages 1–19.
- Survivors of firearm injury often endure lifelong physical, cognitive, emotional, and social impacts.
- National systems do not yet reliably track the full burden of **nonfatal firearm injuries** (intent, location, demographics) — hampering prevention efforts.

## Sources

<https://injuryfacts.nsc.org/all-injuries/overview/>

<https://injuryfacts.nsc.org/all-injuries/intentional-deaths/compared-to-preventable/>

<https://www.cdc.gov/firearm-violence/data-research/facts-stats/>

<https://ndc.services.cdc.gov/case-definitions/injuries-related-to-firearms/>

## Why Focus Matters:

### Impact & Return on Investment

- **Injury prevention interventions are proven to work.** Seat belts, safe storage of firearms, fall-prevention programs, prescription monitoring, and community violence interruption have demonstrated effectiveness. With sustained support, decades of injuries and deaths have been averted.
- **Broad societal costs** (healthcare, lost productivity, long-term care) are immense, making prevention a cost-effective public health investment.
- **Reducing injuries contributes to equity:** many injury burdens fall disproportionately on marginalized and high-risk communities (e.g. by income, race/ethnicity, geography).

## National Injury Prevention Day

National Injury Prevention Day is an annual event dedicated to raising awareness about injury prevention and promoting safety in our communities. On November 18, 2025, organizations across the country will come together to share knowledge, resources, and strategies for preventing injuries and violence.

### Key messages

- **Injuries are not accidents.** Most can be prevented with proven strategies.
- **Prevention saves lives and money.** Lower healthcare costs, less lost productivity, and stronger communities.
- **Stories matter.** Highlight survivors, families, and communities to connect the data to lived experience.
- **Everyone has a role.** From policymakers to parents to community leaders, prevention is shared work.

To learn more, visit

**[NationalInjuryPreventionDay.org](https://NationalInjuryPreventionDay.org)**