

Accidents claim lives of 12,000 U.S. kids each year, CDC reports

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New report also finds that boys face twice the risk as girls.

(HealthDay)—About 12,000 children die from unintended, accidental injuries each year, most of them preventable, according to a report issued Thursday by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The agency also noted that between 2000 and 2009, almost 116,000 Americans age 19 and younger lost their lives to these types of incidents, with boys facing nearly double the risk compared to girls. More than 9 million young people are also treated in the nation's emergency departments for nonfatal injuries each year, the CDC estimates.

With accidents remaining the leading killer of children, "decreasing the burden of injuries is a central challenge for public health in the United States," the CDC team concluded.

The study, led by Nagesh Borse of the CDC's Center for [Global Health](#),

is published in the Oct. 19 issue of the agency's journal [Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report](#).

In the new report, the researchers turned to a statistical measure known as "years of potential life lost"(YPLL) to highlight the loss to society when very young people die. This measurement calculates the total number of years lost prior to the expected lifespan for these children.

The study found that boys had nearly double the years lost from [fatal accidents](#) compared to girls—1,137 lost years per 100,000 vs. 630 per 100,000, respectively.

Teenagers were more at risk than younger children (excepting babies), the report found. For example, while the rate of years lost for kids aged 5 to 9 was 367 per 100,000, it climbed to 1,768 for those aged 15 to 19.

But the highest death toll was reserved for infants under the age of one. Infants had a YPLL of 1,977 per 100,000, with most cases linked to suffocation (such as when infants die in their cribs).

[Traffic accidents](#) contributed to the majority (55 percent) of all life-years lost during the study period, the CDC team said. There were five times more years lost due to [motor vehicle accidents](#) than for the second leading cause, suffocation. Drowning was the third leading cause of child deaths.

Steps can be taken to turn these statistics around, however. "Most injuries are preventable, and many strategies are available to reduce child injury and mortality," the CDC said. Parents and schools can help with many of these efforts, which include "using safety belts, reducing drinking and driving, strengthening graduated driver licensing laws, using safety equipment during sports participation, requiring four-sided residential pool fencing, and encouraging safe sleep practices for

infants," the agency added.

More information: The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention outlines the [ABCs of raising safe and healthy children](#).

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