

Injury is the Leading Cause of Death in Children

Unintentional injuries are the leading cause of death for children ages 1 to 17 in the U.S., followed by homicide and suicide. For children under the age of 1 year, unintentional injuries are the fourth leading cause of death.¹

Impact and Magnitude of Injuries in Children

In 2023, more than 145,000 injuries were sustained by children in Indiana, including 283 deaths (17.8 per 100,000), 1,453 hospitalizations (91.5 per 100,000), and 143,555 ED visits (9,044.2 per 100,000).² Data are not available to calculate how many children with injuries were treated in other settings or went untreated.



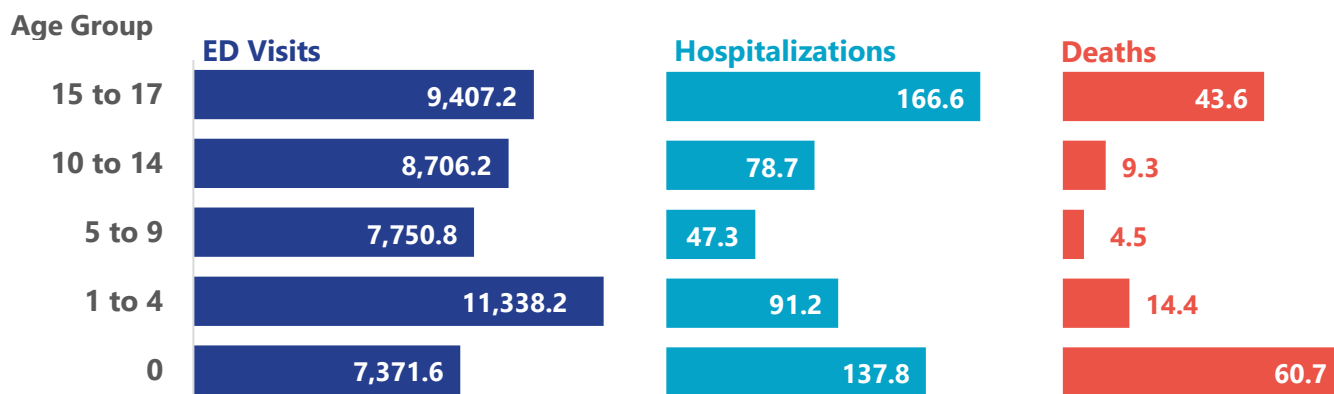
Child Injuries in Indiana, 2023:

283 deaths
1,453 hospitalizations
143,555 ED visits

Injuries by Age Group

Children between the ages of 1 and 4 had the highest rate of ED visits due to injury. In contrast, rates of injury-related hospitalization and death were highest among children under 1 and ages 15-17.

Figure 1. Crude rates per 100,000 of injury ED visits, hospitalizations, and deaths, Indiana, 2023



¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS) [online] [cited 2025 Feb 11]. Available from: www.wisqars.cdc.gov

² Injury deaths are from Indiana vital records. Hospitalization and ED visit data are from Indiana hospital discharge data and include only non-fatal hospitalizations and ED visits. Deaths, hospitalizations, and ED visits were calculated based on definitions from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention available at: <https://stacks.cdc.gov/view/cdc/128417>.

Child Injuries by Sex, Race, and Ethnicity

In 2023, a higher proportion of pediatric injury deaths, hospitalizations, and ED visits occurred among males than females. Males accounted for more than two-thirds (68%) of pediatric deaths, 57% of hospitalizations, and 56% of ED visits due to injury. Non-Hispanic Black/African-American children had the highest rates of injury deaths. Hispanic children had lower rates of injury ED visits and hospitalizations than non-Hispanic children.

Figure 2. Child injury deaths, hospitalizations, and ED visits by sex, Indiana, 2023

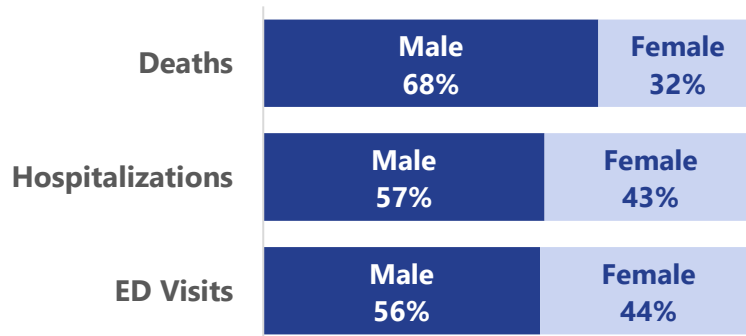
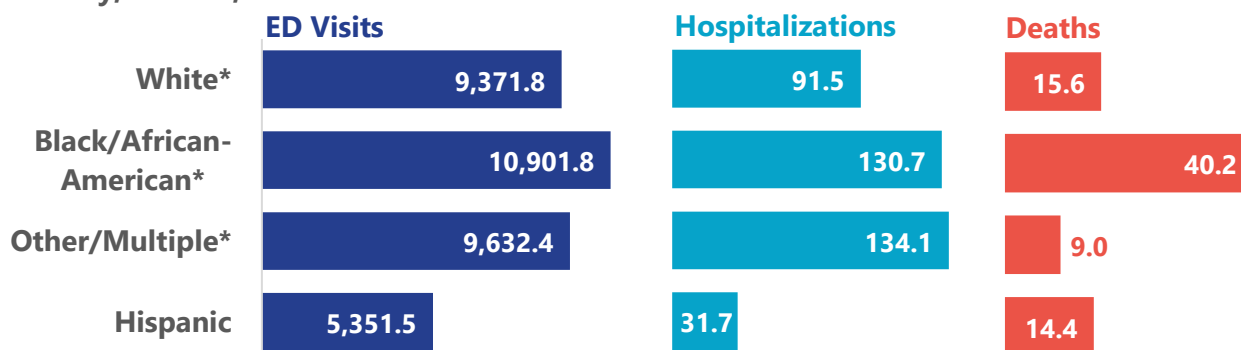


Figure 3. Crude rates per 100,000 of injury ED visits, hospitalizations, and deaths by race and ethnicity, Indiana, 2023

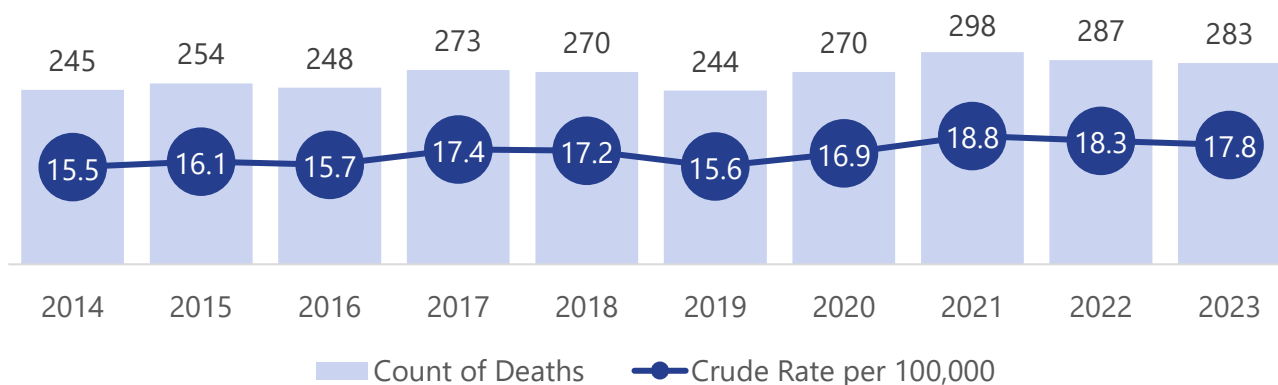


*Non-Hispanic or unknown ethnicity

Trends in Child Injury Mortality

The rate of child injury deaths has increased slightly overall between 2014 and 2023, although child injury mortality rates decreased in 2022 and 2023 compared to a high of 298 deaths (18.8 per 100,000) in 2021.

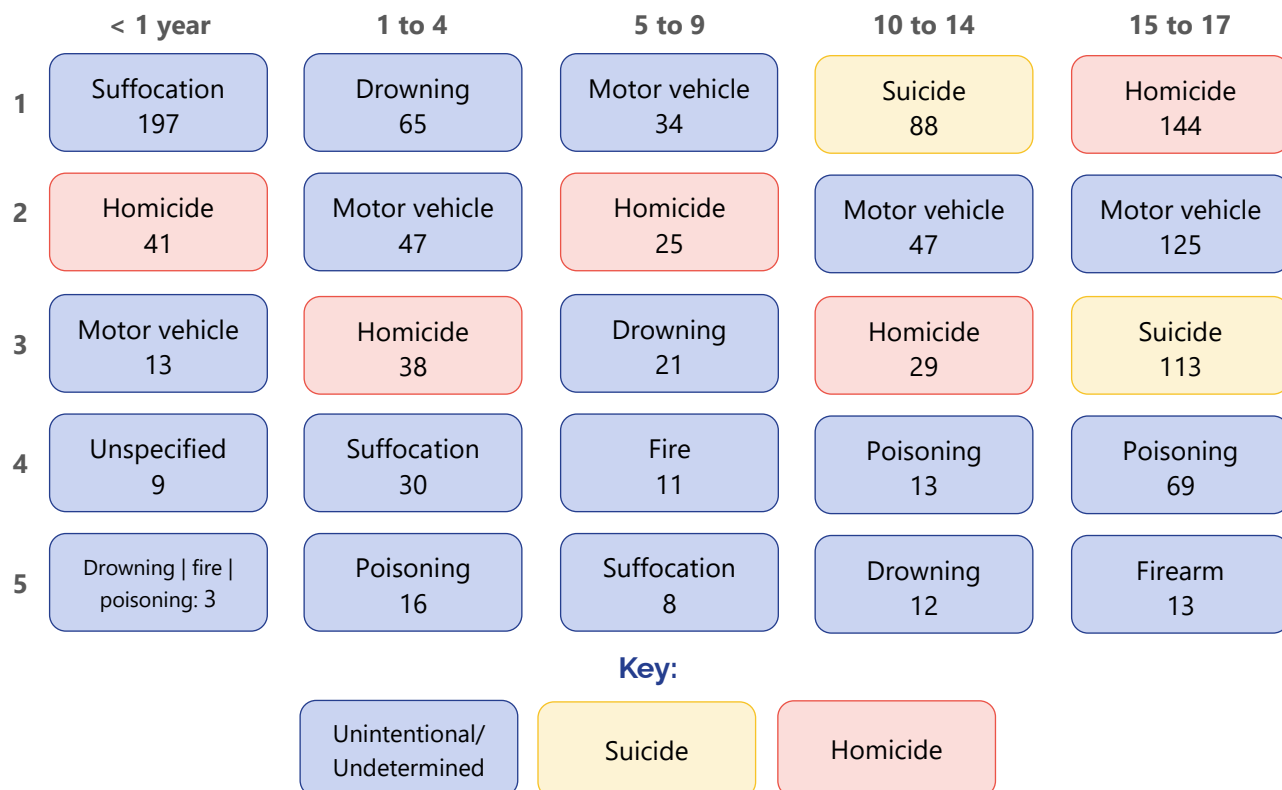
Figure 4. Child injury deaths, Indiana, 2014-2023



Leading Causes of Child Injury Deaths

Leading causes of child injury deaths vary by age group. In 2019 to 2023, unintentional suffocation, drowning, and motor vehicle injuries were the leading causes of injury death for children ages <1 year, 1-4 years, and 5-9 years, respectively. Suicide was the leading cause for 10 to 14-year-olds, and homicide was the leading cause for adolescents ages 15 to 17.

Figure 5. Leading causes³ of child injury deaths by age group, 2019 to 2023



Child Injury Prevention Resources

Additional information about injury prevention is available at the links below:

- IDOH injury prevention resources:
- <https://www.in.gov/health/trauma-system/injury-prevention/>
- CDC: Safety, Health, and Injury Prevention Recommendations: https://www.cdc.gov/early-care/safety/index.html#cdc_preparedness_how_it-keeping-children-safe-from-injury
- CDC Young Children: Safety in the Home & Community: <https://www.cdc.gov/parents/children/safety-in-the-home-and-community.html>
- CDC: Youth Violence Prevention resources: <https://www.cdc.gov/youth-violence/prevention/index.html>

³ Other than suicides and homicides, all causes listed include unintentional injuries and injuries of undetermined intent. Motor vehicle injuries include only motor vehicle – traffic injuries and exclude motor vehicle non-traffic injuries. Poisoning injuries include both drug and non-drug poisoning. When more than one cause is listed, counts represent the deaths for each cause (not the combined total).

