



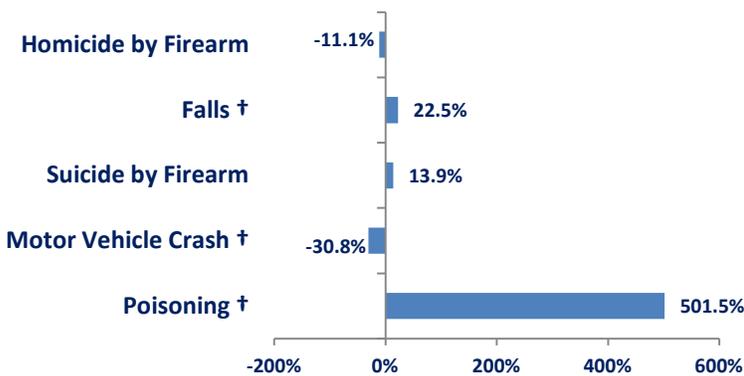
**INJURY** is the leading cause of death among Indiana residents ages 1–44 and the fifth leading cause of death overall.<sup>1</sup> The majority of injuries are unintentional; however, some can be inflicted intentionally through self-harm or by another individual. Injuries are not the result of an accident, but are correctable events with specific risks for occurrence. Injuries affect all groups of people, regardless of age, race or economic status. In 2009, 3,886 Hoosiers were fatally injured and an additional 50,800 were hospitalized.<sup>1,2</sup> Figure 1 shows the age-adjusted injury death rates during 1999 to 2009.

Figure 1. Injury death rates\* by year, Indiana, 1999–2009<sup>1</sup>



In Indiana, unintentional poisonings, unintentional falls and suicides by firearm are leading causes of injury death that increased from 1999 to 2009 [Fig 2].<sup>1</sup> Unintentional poisoning deaths among adolescents, young adults and adults have sharply increased in recent years, mostly as a result of prescription drug misuse and abuse. Unintentional fall deaths have also increased and are expected to continue to increase as Indiana’s population ages.

Figure 2. Percent change in death rates\* by injury type, Indiana, 1999 vs. 2009<sup>1</sup>



\*Age-adjusted rates  
† Unintentional

### Unintentional poisonings

A poison is any substance, including medication, that is harmful to your body if too much is eaten, inhaled, injected, or absorbed through the skin.<sup>3</sup> Nationally, 91% of unintentional poisoning deaths result from drug overdoses.<sup>3</sup> Annually, the nonmedical use of prescription painkillers (e.g., opioids or narcotic pain relievers) causes more deaths than heroin and cocaine combined and totals more than \$50 billion in economic costs.<sup>4,5</sup>

#### In the United States (2010):

- On average, 87 people died each day as a result of unintentional poisonings; 2,277 were treated in emergency departments.<sup>3</sup>
- Enough painkillers were prescribed to medicate every adult around-the-clock for a month.<sup>4</sup>
- About 12 million people, ages 12 and older, reported nonmedical use (i.e., misuse or abuse) of prescription painkillers during the last month.<sup>4</sup>

#### In Indiana (2009):<sup>1</sup>

- Unintentional poisoning is the leading cause of injury death overall and surpassed motor vehicle crashes as the leading cause in 2009.
- There were 790 unintentional poisoning deaths, accounting for 20% of all injury deaths.
- The unintentional poisoning death rate increased 502% from 1999 to 2009 [Fig 2].
- Adults ages 25–64 are at greatest risk of death due to unintentional poisoning.

### Motor vehicle crashes (MVC)

MVC deaths have declined in recent years; however, they still remain a leading cause of injury death in the United States and Indiana.<sup>1</sup>

#### In the United States:

- MVCs are the leading cause of death among those ages 10–34.<sup>6</sup>
- In 2010, nearly 33,000 people were killed in MVCs and an additional 2.2 million were injured.<sup>7</sup>

#### In Indiana (2010):<sup>8</sup>

- There were 754 MVC fatalities, an 11% increase from 2009.
- The economic costs of MVCs exceeded \$4.4 billion.



## Unintentional falls

Falls are among the most frequent and preventable causes of injury. Common results of falls, including hip fractures, head traumas, lacerations and limited mobility, increase the risk of early death, specifically among older adults.<sup>9</sup>

### ***In the United States (adults ages 65 and older):***

- ❑ An estimated 1 out of 3 will fall each year, but less than half will discuss the fall with a healthcare provider.<sup>10,11</sup>
- ❑ In 2000, the total direct medical costs of all fall injuries exceeded \$19 billion. Approximately \$0.2 billion of this cost was associated with fatal deaths while \$19 billion was for nonfatal falls.<sup>12</sup>

### ***In Indiana (2009):***

- ❑ Falls were the leading cause of injury hospitalization for all ages, totaling over 11,000 hospitalizations.<sup>2</sup>
- ❑ There were 303 fall-related deaths among adults ages 65 and older, which accounted for 81% of the total fall-related deaths (Total = 374 deaths).<sup>1</sup>
- ❑ The unintentional falls death rate increased 22.5% from 1999 to 2009 [Fig 2].<sup>1</sup>

## Community resources

- ❑ To find an addiction or mental health services provider, visit the [county listing of providers](#).
- ❑ For poisoning information and educational materials visit the [Indiana Poison Center website](#).
- ❑ For a listing of permanent car seat fitting stations and upcoming clinics in Indiana, visit [Indiana's Automotive Safety Program website](#).
- ❑ To learn more about traffic safety efforts and child passenger safety training in Indiana, visit the [Indiana Criminal Justice Institute website](#).
- ❑ Local Area Agencies on Aging offer fall prevention programming for older adults. Contact information for agencies can be found [online](#) or by calling: 317-205-9201.
- ❑ [SilverSneakers](#) is an innovative health, exercise and wellness program that helps older adults live healthy, active lifestyles and is offered at health centers throughout the state.

## References

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## TAKE ACTION: Steps you can take to prevent or manage injuries

### ***Medication safety***

- ❑ Only take prescription medications that are prescribed to you by a healthcare provider
- ❑ Never take larger or more frequent medication doses
- ❑ Never share or sell your medications
- ❑ Properly dispose unused, unneeded or expired medications ([National Drug Take Back Days](#))
- ❑ Put the Poison Help number, 1-800-222-1222, on or near your home phone and save it on your cell phone

### ***Fall prevention***

- ❑ Begin a regular exercise program that includes balance exercises
- ❑ Have your health care provider review your medicines
- ❑ Have your vision routinely checked
- ❑ Make your home safer by completing an in-home assessment of fall hazards ([Checklist](#))

### ***Motor vehicle safety***

- ❑ Always wear a seatbelt and ensure proper use of car seats for infants and children
- ❑ Eliminate driving distractions, including use of cell phones for text messaging
- ❑ Never drive impaired or ride with impaired drivers
- ❑ Report drivers who are exhibiting signs of impaired driving to law enforcement