

Unintentional Injury, 2012

Injuries are a leading cause of death and disability. While many people think of injuries as “accidents,” most are predictable and preventable.¹

Unintentional injury was the leading cause of death among 1-44 year old Mainers and the fifth leading cause of death among all ages combined in 2005-2009.² Maine’s unintentional injury death rate was significantly higher than the U.S. rate for this five-year period.³ The leading causes of unintentional injury death in Maine were motor vehicle traffic incidents, poisoning, and falls.² The number of deaths due to unintentional poisoning increased four-fold between 1999 and 2009.⁴ The lifetime medical and work loss costs associated with all unintentional injury deaths that occurred in Maine in 2005 alone are estimated to be more than \$500 million (in 2005 dollars).⁵

Unintentional injury related measures chosen for the State Health Assessment include:⁶

- Traumatic brain injury hospital discharges
- Traumatic brain injury emergency department visits
- Emergency department visits due to falls among adults 65 and over
- Unintentional and undetermined poisoning deaths
- Motor vehicle traffic deaths
- Adults who always use a seatbelt
- Students who always wear a seatbelt

Additional unintentional injury related measures can be found in the Environmental Health and Occupational Health sections of the State Health Assessment.⁶

The occurrence of unintentional injuries and preventive behaviors included in State Health Assessment measures vary across population groups in the state. For example, males are at higher risk of motor vehicle traffic deaths, unintentional and undetermined intent poisoning



deaths, and hospital encounters related to traumatic brain injury, while females are at higher risk of older adult fall-related emergency department visits. High school students of color (except Asian) are less likely than White students to report they always wear seat belts when riding in a car. Injury risk also varies by county and Public Health District; Somerset County was at significantly increased risk on four of the seven unintentional injury measures, more than any other county in the state.⁶

Healthy Maine 2020 also has objectives related to unintentional injury, including:⁷

- Reduce motor vehicle crash related deaths
- Prevent an increase in the rate of poisoning deaths (all intents and unintentional or undetermined intent)
- Reduce emergency department visits due to unintentional falls among older adults
- Reduce the rate of infant death
- Reduce the rate of injury and illness cases involving days away from work due to overexertion
- Reduce the rate of injury and illness cases involving days away from work due to repetitive motion
- Reduce deaths from work-related injuries
- Reduce nonfatal work-related injuries

- ¹ Healthy People 2020. Injury and violence prevention: overview. Available from: <http://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topicsobjectives2020/overview.aspx?topicid=24> (accessed 3/21/2013).
- ² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS). Leading causes of death. Available from: http://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/leading_causes_death.html (accessed 3/19/2013).
- ³ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. Multiple Cause of Death on CDC WONDER Online Database. Available from: <http://wonder.cdc.gov/mcd-icd10.html> (accessed 3/21/2013).
- ⁴ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS). Fatal injury reports. Available from: http://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/fatal_injury_reports.html (accessed 3/21/2013).
- ⁵ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS). Cost of injury reports. Available from: <http://wisqars.cdc.gov:8080/costT/> (accessed 3/21/2013).
- ⁶ Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention. State health assessment – 2012. Available from: <http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/phdata/sha/index.shtml> (accessed 3/22/2013).
- ⁷ Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention. Healthy Maine 2020. Available from: <http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/healthy-maine/index.shtml>.