

# Unintentional Injury – Causes

**Residents age 65 and over are more likely to die from falls and residents age 21 - 44 years are more likely to die from unintentional poisoning (often drug overdoses).**



In Contra Costa, the leading causes of unintentional injury death are car crashes, poisoning, falls, drowning and choking/suffocation. **The ranking of these causes of unintentional injury death vary by age group.**

Over a three-year period 2000-2002, there were 666 unintentional injury deaths among Contra Costa residents. This means that **approximately 220 Contra Costa residents die from unintentional injury each year.**

The crude death rate for unintentional injury among all age groups was 22.8 per 100,000 residents.

Table 56. Most common causes of unintentional injury death. Contra Costa, 2000- 2002

	Deaths	Rate
1. Car crashes	224	7.7
2. Poisoning	158	5.4
3. Falls	92	3.2
4. Drowning	40	1.4
5. Choking/suffocation	25	0.9

Rates are crude death rates per 100,000 residents.

## Age 65+

Over a three-year period 2000-2002, there were 171 unintentional injury deaths among Contra Costa residents age 65 and over. The crude death rate for unintentional injury was also higher among adults in this age group (52.0 per 100,000) than for all age groups combined (22.8 per 100,000).

Older residents are more likely to die from an injury because their bodies are less able to sustain or recover from an injury such as the physical impact of a car crash or fall.

**Falls and car crashes are the leading causes of unintentional injury death among Contra Costa residents age 65 and over.** The crude death rate for falls was higher among residents age 65 and over (21.0 per 100,000) than for all age groups combined (3.2 per 100,000).



Table 57. Most common causes of unintentional injury death for residents age 65+. Contra Costa, 2000- 2002

	Deaths	Rate
1. Falls	69	*21.0
2. Car crashes	41	12.5

[\*] Indicates that the death rate (per 100,000) from falls is significantly higher among residents age 65 and over compared to all age groups combined. Due to small and unstable counts (<20 deaths), the 21 unintentional injury deaths from other causes are not shown in this table. Rates are crude death rates per 100,000 residents.

## Age 45- 64 years

Poisoning and car crashes are the leading causes of unintentional injury death among Contra Costa residents age 45- 64 years.

Over a three-year period 2000-2002, there were a total of 162 unintentional injury deaths among Contra Costa residents age 45- 64 years. The crude death rate for unintentional injury was 22.8 per 100,000 among adults in this age group.

Table 58. Most common causes of unintentional injury death for residents age 45-64 years. Contra Costa, 2000-2002

	Deaths	Rate
1. Poisoning	65	9.1
2. Car crashes	47	6.6

**Due to small and unstable counts (<20 deaths), the 50 unintentional injury deaths from other causes are not shown in this table.**

Rates are crude death rates per 100,000 residents.

## Age 21- 44 years

Car crashes and poisoning are the leading causes of unintentional injury death among Contra Costa residents age 21-44 years.

The crude death rate for unintentional poisoning was higher among residents age 21-44 years (8.8 per 100,000) than for all age groups combined (5.4 per 100,000). Most of these deaths from unintentional poisoning were due to drug overdoses.

Over a three-year period 2000-2002, there were 235 unintentional injury deaths among Contra Costa residents age 21-44 years. The crude death rate for unintentional injury was 23.5 per 100,000 among adults in this age group.

Table 59. Most common causes of unintentional injury death for residents age 21-44 years. Contra Costa, 2000-2002

	Deaths	Rate
1. Car crashes	90	9.0
2. Poisoning	88	*8.8

[\*] Indicates that the death rate (per 100,000) from unintentional poisoning is significantly higher among residents age 21-44 years compared to all age groups combined.

**Due to small and unstable counts (<20 deaths), the 57 unintentional injury deaths from other causes are not shown in this table.** Rates are crude death rates per 100,000 residents.

# Age 0-20 years

Car crashes and drowning are the leading causes of unintentional injury death among Contra Costa residents age 0-20 years. Residents who die in car crashes can include drivers, passengers, bicyclists and pedestrians.

Over a three-year period 2000-2002, there were 87 unintentional injury deaths among Contra Costa residents age 0-20 years. **The crude death rate for unintentional injury was lower among residents age 0- 20 years** (9.9 per 100,000) than for all age groups combined (22.8 per 100,000).


Table 60. Common causes of unintentional injury death for residents age 0- 20 years. Contra Costa, 2000- 2002

	Deaths	Rate
1. Car crashes	46	5.2
2. Drowning	20	2.3

**Due to small and unstable counts (<20 deaths), the 21 unintentional injury deaths from other causes are not shown in this table.**

Rates are crude death rates per 100,000 residents.





### Why do we use crude rates?

A crude rate controls for differences in population size and is a good summary statistic for comparing outcomes like unintentional injury or homicide across groups of different sizes.

**For example**, we expect to see many more unintentional injury deaths in California than in Contra Costa because the population of California is so much larger than the population of Contra Costa County. A crude rate allows us to compare the impact of unintentional injury across groups of different sizes. (See the methods section for more information about using rates.)

The differences highlighted above are statistically significant. This means that we are 95% certain that these differences are not due to chance.

## How to calculate the number of deaths

Numbers show the actual number of unintentional injury deaths from each cause over a three-year period. The number of deaths per year can be calculated by dividing the total number of deaths from 2000-2002 by three.

### **Confidence intervals are available**

You may download and view all detailed tables with 95% confidence intervals, at [http://cchealth.org/health\\_data/hospital\\_council/](http://cchealth.org/health_data/hospital_council/)

## **Data sources**

Mortality data from the California Department of Health Services Epidemiology and Prevention for Injury Control (EPIC) branch, Data Summaries: Injuries by Cause and Age, available online at: <http://www.dhs.ca.gov/epic/>. Any analyses, interpretations or conclusions of the data have been reached by CHAPE and are not from the CDHS.

Population data from the California Department of Finance, Race/ Ethnic Population with Age and Sex Detail, 2000-2050, with DRU Benchmark, available online at: <http://www.dof.ca.gov/HTML/DEMOGRAP/Druhpar.htm>. Sacramento, California, May 2004.

Note: City-level denominators were extrapolated from the E-4 file to approximate the mid-year city-level population estimates that are needed to calculate city-level rates. For more information, please see our section on statistical methods.

ICD10 coding for unintentional injury (ICD V01-X59, Y85-Y86) from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention National Center for Health Statistics, available online at: [http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr50/nvsr50\\_16.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr50/nvsr50_16.pdf).

Healthy People 2010 objectives from the US Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, available online at <http://www.healthypeople.gov/>.