Injuries Among California Children and Young Adults

What It Is
On kidsdata.org, measures of non-fatal injuries among children and young adults are based on hospital discharges. Data are available as:

- Single-year numbers and rates for injuries overall, intentional injuries (self-inflicted and assault), and unintentional injuries among children and youth ages 20 and under, by age group
- Three-year injury rates for children and youth ages 20 and under, by age group and intent (unintentional, self-inflicted, assault, and other)
- Single-year numbers and rates for firearm-related injuries among children and young adults ages 24 and under, by age group and intent, by gender and intent, and by race/ethnicity and intent

Why This Topic Is Important
More than 8 million children and youth are treated for non-fatal injuries in U.S. emergency rooms each year, and more than 200,000 require hospitalization. For some, injuries can lead to chronic pain, permanent disability, depression, and decreased ability to participate in educational and social activities. Family members often must care for an injured child, which can cause stress and lost income. Considering medical and other expenses, work loss, and reduced quality of life, unintentional injuries among children in the U.S. cost more than $200 billion annually.

Intentional injuries, such as assault or self-inflicted harm, though less common than unintentional injuries, still are among the leading causes of non-fatal injury hospitalization among children and youth ages 0-19, statewide and nationally.

Firearm injuries, which may be intentional or unintentional, disproportionately affect young people. In 2014, California youth ages 15-24 represented less than 15% of the state’s population but accounted for more than 40% of all non-fatal firearm-related injuries.

How Children Are Faring
The rate of injury hospitalization among California young people ages 20 and under was 214 per 100,000 in 2015, down from 484 per 100,000 in 1991—a difference that amounts to more than 23,000 fewer discharges for non-fatal injuries statewide. Across counties with...
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Unintentional</th>
<th>Self-Inflicted</th>
<th>Assault</th>
<th>All Intents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>139</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>892</td>
<td>1,174</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>993</td>
<td>1,313</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Definition:** Number of hospital discharges for non-fatal firearm-related injuries among children and young adults ages 0-24, by gender and intent (e.g., in 2015, there were 892 firearm injury hospitalizations for assault among California males ages 0-24).

**Data Source:** California Dept. of Public Health, EpiCenter (Feb. 2020); California Dept. of Finance, Population Estimates and Projections (Jan. 2020); CDC, WISQARS (May 2020).

**Firearm Injury Hospitalizations Among Children and Young Adults Ages 24 and Under, by Race/Ethnicity: 2015**

![Bar chart showing hospitalization rates by race/ethnicity in California]

**Definition:** Number of hospital discharges for non-fatal firearm-related injuries per 100,000 children and young adults ages 0-24, by race/ethnicity and intent (e.g., in 2015, there were 8.4 firearm injury hospitalizations for assault per 100,000 Hispanic/Latino children and young adults in California).

**Data Source:** California Dept. of Public Health, EpiCenter (Feb. 2020); California Dept. of Finance, Population Estimates and Projections (Jan. 2020).

Between 1991 and 2015, statewide discharge rates for unintentional injuries, which account for a majority of injury hospitalizations among children and youth ages 0-20, also dropped by more than 50% overall and in all age groups but infants ages under age 1, whose rates fell less than 20%. In 1991 infants had the second lowest rate of discharge for unintentional injuries among age groups (298 per 100,000), whereas by 2012 they had the highest (249 per 100,000). By contrast, rates of discharge for intentional injuries consistently are highest among youth ages 16-20 (108 per 100,000 in 2015), followed by children ages 13-15 (80 per 100,000 in 2015).

In 2015, non-fatal firearm injuries accounted for 1,313 hospital discharges among California children and young adults ages 24 and under (9.7 per 100,000), down from 5,040 (43 per 100,000) in 1991. In 2015, boys and young men were discharged for firearm injuries at more than eight times the rate of girls and young women (17 vs. 2.1 per 100,000), and the rate of discharge among African American/black youth (49.4 per 100,000) was more than four times higher than Hispanic/Latino youth, more than 15 times higher than white youth, and more than 30 times higher than Asian/Pacific Islander youth. Across demographic groups, the most common intent of firearm-related injury is assault.

**View references for this text and additional research on this topic:**
https://www.kidsdata.org/topic/55/injuries/summary