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Death among children and adolescents

The information below is from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Accidents (unintentional injuries) are, by far, the leading cause of death among children and teens.

THE TOP THREE CAUSES OF DEATH BY AGE GROUP

0 to less than 28 days after birth:

- Conditions due to premature birth (short gestation) and low birth weight
- Developmental and genetic conditions that were present at birth
- Maternal complications of pregnancy

28 days through 11 months after birth:

- Sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS)
- Accidents (unintentional injuries)
- Developmental and genetic conditions that were present at birth

1 to 4 years:

- Accidents (unintentional injuries)
- Developmental and genetic conditions that were present at birth
- Homicide

5 to 9 years:

- Accidents (unintentional injuries)
- Cancer
- Homicide

10 to 14 years

- Accidents (unintentional injuries)
- Suicide (intentional self-harm)

- Cancer

CONDITIONS PRESENT AT BIRTH

Some birth defects cannot be prevented. Other problems may be diagnosed during pregnancy. These conditions, when recognized, may be prevented or treated while the baby is still in the womb or right after birth.

Tests that may be done before or during pregnancy include:

- Amniocentesis
- Chorionic villus sampling
- Fetal ultrasound
- Genetic screening of the parents
- Medical histories and childbirth history of the parents

PREMATURITY AND LOW BIRTH WEIGHT

Death due to prematurity often results from a lack of prenatal care. If you are pregnant and are not receiving prenatal care, contact your health care provider or local department of health. Most state health departments have programs that provide prenatal care to mothers, even if they do not have insurance and are not able to pay.

All sexually active and pregnant teens and women should be educated about the importance of prenatal care.

SUICIDE

It is important to watch teens for signs of stress, depression, and suicidal behavior. Open communication between the teen and parents or other people of trust is very important for preventing teen suicide.

If you or someone you know is thinking about suicide, call or text 988 or chat 988lifeline.org. You can also call 1-800-273-8255 (1-800-273-TALK). The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline provides free and confidential support 24/7, anytime day or night.

You can also call 911 or the local emergency number or go to the hospital emergency room. Do not delay.

HOMICIDE

Homicide is a complex issue that does not have a simple answer. Prevention requires an understanding of the root causes and a willingness of the public to change those causes.

AUTO ACCIDENTS

The automobile accounts for the largest number of accidental deaths. All infants and children should use the proper child car seats, booster seats, and seat belts.

Other top causes of accidental death are drowning, fire, falls, and poisoning.

Alternative Names

Childhood and adolescent causes of death

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Updated by: Neil K. Kaneshiro, MD, MHA, Clinical Professor of Pediatrics, University of Washington School of Medicine, Seattle, WA. Also reviewed by David C. Dugdale, MD, Medical Director, Brenda Conaway, Editorial Director, and the A.D.A.M. Editorial team. Editorial update 01/14/2025.

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