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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 1 year:

- Developmental and genetic conditions that were present at birth
- Conditions due to premature birth (short gestation)
- Health problems of the mother during pregnancy

1 to 4 years:

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

5 to 14 years:

- Accidents (unintentional injuries)
- Cancer
- Suicide

### 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, call 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 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.

## 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

## References

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website. Child health. [www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/child-health.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/child-health.htm) [https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/child-health.htm]. Updated January 12, 2021. Accessed February 9, 2021.

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