



Unintentional Injuries after SCI (Related to falls)

Does your injury level or gender affect your probability of have unintentional injuries related to falls? If you are a female, you are at higher risk for unintentional injuries related to falls, comparing with male. If your injury is at cervical level, you are at lower risk for unintentional injuries related to falls, comparing with other level injuries.

Does being able to walk affect your probability of have unintentional injuries related to falls? If you can walk and do not require others' assistance, you are at higher risk for unintentional injuries related to falls, comparing with those who cannot walk. If you can walk and not requiring others' assistance, you are at higher risk for unintentional injuries related to falls, comparing with those who cannot walk. If you can walk but requiring others' assistance, you are at higher risk for unintentional injuries related to falls, comparing with both those who cannot walk and those who can walk without assistance.

Does prescription medication use affect your probability of have unintentional injuries related to falls? The more frequently you use prescription medication to treat pain, the higher risk you have for unintentional injuries related to falls. The more frequently you use prescription medication to treat depression, the higher risk you have for unintentional injuries related to falls. If you have ever used prescription medications to treat symptoms other than for which they were intended, you are at higher risk for unintentional injuries related to falls, comparing with those who do not.

Does taking non-medical substances or drinking alcohol affect my risk of unintentional injuries related to falls? If you have taken any non-medical substance, such as Cannabis, Cocaine, Amphetamine type stimulants, Inhalants, Sedatives or Sleeping Pills, Hallucinogens, and Opioids, in the past 3 months, you are at higher risk for unintentional injuries related to falls, comparing with those who do not. People who frequently do heavy drinking or binge drinking of five or more drinks during a single occasion may have reduced life expectancy. If you have six or more occasions drinking five or more drinks within the last month, you are at higher risk for unintentional injuries related to falls, comparing with those who do not. The more frequent the heavy drinking, the greater the risk.

Taking some types of medications and heavy drinking may particularly lead to a greater risk of mortality. On the other hand, decreasing the frequency of use of prescription pain medication has been found to result in unintentional injuries. *This does not mean individuals should stop or cut back on their prescription medication use based on these findings. Individuals with SCI who take prescription medications should consult their physicians or healthcare providers before making any changes.*

How accurate are the probability estimates of have unintentional injuries related to falls? The accuracy of unintentional injuries related to falls estimates depends on a number of factors, including the quality of the data upon which they are based, the number of individuals upon which they are based, and the number of factors that are used in the prediction. In general, the higher the quality of the study, the greater the number of participants, and the greater number of factors accounted for will lead to more accurate estimates.

Should I base my health care decisions on this or other fact sheets? No. The information is only to help you understand what we know about life expectancy and SCI. No single study is definitive. Although we have attempted to summarize the relevant information from a number of studies published in scientific journals, we have not conducted a systematic or comprehensive review of the literature. We rely heavily on our own findings which are generally representative of the SCI studies reported in the literature.

You should always consult your physician or healthcare provider before making important decisions regarding your health and health behaviors. In particular, if you have concerns that something you are doing might affect your life expectancy you should consult with your healthcare provider. It is always important to see how the results of studies may apply to you as an individual.