



Unintentional Injuries after SCI

Does your race, age or gender affect your probability of having unintentional injuries?

- If you are a male, you are at higher risk for unintentional, comparing with female.
- If you are non-Hispanic Black, you are at higher risk for unintentional injuries, comparing with others.
- The younger you are, the higher risk you have for unintentional injuries.
- The more years post injury you are, the higher risk you have for unintentional injuries.

Does taking non-medical substances affect my risk of unintentional injuries?

- 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, comparing with those who do not.

Does drinking alcohol affect my risk of unintentional injuries?

- 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, comparing with those who do not.
- The more frequent the heavy drinking, the greater the risk.
- Heavy drinking may particularly lead to a greater risk of mortality.

Does prescription medication use affect your probability of have unintentional injuries?

- The more frequently you use prescription medication to treat pain, the higher risk you have for unintentional injuries.
- The more frequently you use prescription medication to treat depression, the higher risk you have for unintentional injuries. 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, comparing with those who do not.
- Taking some types of medications 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 reduced risk of 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.

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 the probability of *having* unintentional injuries not related to falls. 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 risk of unintentional injuries 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.