Firearm Violence in the US

A firearm injury is a gunshot wound or penetrating injury caused by a weapon that uses a powder charge (handguns, rifles, and shotguns).

What Are the Different Types of Firearm Injury?
The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) defines the following types of firearm injuries:

- **Intentionally self-inflicted:** Includes suicide by firearm or nonfatal self-harm injury from a firearm.
- **Unintentional:** Includes fatal or nonfatal firearm injuries without evidence of intentional harm (such as when playing with or cleaning a firearm).
- **Interpersonal violence:** Includes firearm homicide or nonfatal assault injury from a firearm.
- **Legal intervention:** Includes firearm injuries inflicted by law enforcement agents acting in the line of duty (during an arrest or while maintaining order).
- **Undetermined intent:** Includes firearm injuries for which there is not enough information to determine the cause.

Yearly Firearm-Related Deaths and Injuries in the US
In 2020, there were 45,222 firearm-related deaths in the US, which amounts to approximately 124 people dying from gun violence each day. More than 50% of these firearm-related deaths were due to suicide and more than 40% were homicides. Nonfatal firearm injuries are more common than firearm-related deaths. However, the exact number of people injured each year by guns is unknown because the US does not currently have a national surveillance system or database that tracks firearm-related injuries.

Leading Causes of Firearm Injury
More than 70% of patients in the US who receive medical treatment for a firearm-related injury were wounded in an assault, and approximately 20% have an unintentional firearm injury. Few individuals with intentionally self-inflicted gun injuries are treated in hospitals because survival after a suicide attempt with a firearm is rare.

Who Is Affected by Firearm Injuries in the US?
Firearm injuries affect people of all ages. In 2020, firearm-related injuries were among the top 5 causes of death for individuals aged 1 to 44 years in the US.

Who Is at Highest Risk of Firearm Injury and Death in the US?
In the US, males account for 86% of deaths and 87% of nonfatal injuries caused by guns. The highest rates of homicide from firearms are among teens and adults aged 15 to 34 years and among individuals who are American Indian or Alaska Native, Black or African American, or Hispanic. The highest rates of suicide from firearms are among adults aged 75 years or older and individuals who are American Indian or Alaska Native or non-Hispanic White.

What Are the Consequences of Firearm Violence?
Survivors of firearm-related injury may experience many chronic health disorders, including physical disability (from brain injury or paralysis from damage to the spinal cord) and long-term problems with memory, thinking, emotions, and chronic mental health disorders (such as posttraumatic stress disorder). Consequences of firearm violence often extend beyond the affected individual, causing negative emotional and psychological effects on family members and friends, and negatively affecting the sense of security and safety of an entire community.

Decreasing the Risk of Firearm Injury
Keeping firearms out of the house may decrease the risk of firearm injury at home. Individuals who have firearms in their home should take the following steps to decrease the risk of gun violence: (1) keep the gun unloaded and locked in a safe or with a trigger lock; (2) store and lock ammunition separately from the firearm; and (3) ensure that children do not have access to keys or codes to gun safes.

FOR MORE INFORMATION
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

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