

What is Injury Prevention ?

Definition

The process of applying injury prevention principles to various public health programs to lower or prevent the number of injuries in a community. Some basic examples are:

- Placing small children into car seats
- Wearing bicycle helmets
- Having boat passengers wear life jackets or float coats
- Installing smoke detectors in homes and public buildings.



In each case, the injury causing event can still occur (e.g., the car crashes, the boat sinks, or the building catches on fire) but the car seat can protect the child from being thrown around or out of the car, the life jacket or float coat can help the boat passenger to minimize the risk of drowning, and the smoke detector alarm alerts people to evacuate the burning building and minimize risk of burns and smoke inhalation.



Guiding Principles of Injury Prevention

- Injuries are predictable and therefore preventable
- Tribal ability to implement and run community programs must be enhanced
- Programs are epidemiology-based (meaning it is data based)
- Changes to the environment are preferred
- Behavioral modification approaches target communities, not individuals
- Linkages with other agencies are essential
- All activities should be evaluated

Key Points About Injury Prevention

There are several key points that need to be understood about injury prevention to create a successful Injury Prevention Program for your community. Injuries top the charts for causing the highest fatality rates in communities. This is a reason for such concern because injuries are preventable.

Developing an Injury Prevention Program(IPP) will benefit every community.

1. Injury in Tribal Communities has a public health impact.
2. Injuries are both predictable and preventable.
3. We can use data to identify patterns and contributors of injuries.
4. We can use injury patterns to effectively target the causes.
5. Multiple prevention strategies have benefits.
6. Working with others increases success.
7. The stages of evaluation help improvement.
8. Selecting your community's strategies for prevention is important.
9. Sharing information in a community leads to overall success.
10. Prevention reduces long-term cost.

Indian Health Service Injury Prevention Mission

To raise the health status of American Indians and Alaska Natives to the highest possible level by :

- Decreasing the incidence of severe injuries and death to the lowest possible level, and
- Increasing the ability of tribes to address their injury problems.