

#### **Test Your Knowledge**

##### **Q: What minors are most affected by firearm injury?**

**A:** Minors with firearms in their homes, and those who live in states with a high gun availability are most at risk of firearm injury or death. Boys carry a 4.5 times higher risk of firearm death than girls, and children 13-17 years old have a risk of firearm death that is 12 times higher than younger children.<sup>3</sup>

##### **Q: What is one of the best ways to increase firearm safety?**

**A:** Not having firearms in the home is the safest way to prevent injury or death. Additionally, locking the firearm in a container is safe and effective.<sup>4</sup> Setting rules for kids on firearm safety is an effective tool to decrease injury or death.<sup>4</sup>

Firearm injury is defined as a wound or penetrating injury from a weapon that uses a powder charge to fire a projectile, these weapons include handguns, rifles, and shotguns.<sup>1</sup> American children have a substantial risk of firearm injury or death.<sup>2</sup> Children refers to ages 0-17.

#### **KNOW THE FACTS<sup>2</sup>**

- In 2015, more than 2,800 people aged 0 – 19 died by gunshot<sup>2</sup>
- Nearly 14,000 people ages 0 – 19 years were injured from a gunshot in 2015.<sup>2</sup>
- In 2019, there were 241 unintended shootings by children, resulting in more than 100 deaths, and nearly 150 injuries<sup>5</sup>
- States with a high gun availability have an increased death rate from gunshots among children.<sup>2</sup>
- Most accidental firearm deaths among minors are from access to a firearms.<sup>2</sup>
- 89% of unintentional shooting deaths among children occur in the home— mostly when playing with a loaded gun.<sup>2</sup>
- Gun ownership increases suicide risk, and those with firearms access are at 2x higher risk of homicide and triple the risk of suicide.<sup>2</sup>
- Firearms violence costs the US billions of dollars each year in medical and lost productivity costs.<sup>1</sup>

#### **WHO IS MOST AFFECTED BY UNSAFE FIREARM USE?**

- Boys have a 4.5 times higher risk than girls of firearm death.<sup>3</sup>
- Boys 13-17 years old have a 6 times higher rate than girls of the same age.<sup>3</sup>
- Boys have an increased risk of homicide, suicide, and unintentional death by firearms, compared to girls.<sup>3</sup>
- Children 13-17 years old have a 12 times higher risk of fatal firearm injury than children aged 0-12 years.<sup>3</sup>
- Boys account for nearly 85% of nonfatal firearm injuries, with rates 5 times higher than girls.<sup>3</sup>
- Older children are 19 times more likely than younger children to suffer from nonfatal firearm injury.<sup>3</sup>

#### **WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES OF UNSAFE USE?<sup>1</sup>**

- Paralysis/spinal cord injury
- Traumatic brain injury
- Problems with memory, thinking and emotions
- Post-traumatic stress disorder
- Long-term mental health conditions
- Criminal charges
- Death

# ThinkFirst about...

## Firearm Safety Fast Facts

... protecting children, including teens! As a parent, prevent access to guns and dedicate time to educate your child on firearm safety: "If you see a gun don't touch it; leave the area and tell an adult right away."

### Test Your Knowledge

**Q: Can parents improve firearm safety for their children?**

**A:** Yes. When the firearm is not in use, make sure it is locked in a child-proof container. Children, including teens, are curious and impulsive; no matter how confident you are in their knowledge, do not assume they will make a good choice if they find a gun.

## ThinkFirst

National Injury Prevention Foundation

The ThinkFirst Foundation is a 501c3 nonprofit organization dedicated to preventing brain, spinal cord and other traumatic injuries through education, research and advocacy. Visit our website to learn more and use our chapter directory to locate a chapter near you — your resource for injury prevention presentations.

[www.thinkfirst.org](http://www.thinkfirst.org)

### SAFETY RULES FOR MINORS<sup>4</sup>

- **STOP!** - the first rule for a child to follow if they find or see a gun is to stop what they are doing
- **Don't touch!** – a child may think the best thing to do is to pick up the gun and take it to an adult, but they need to know they should never touch a gun
- **Leave the area!** – immediately leave the area and never take the gun away from another child or try to stop someone from using the gun
- **Tell an adult right away!** – help your children know they should always tell you if they see a gun, or know of someone having a gun

### VIOLENCE PREVENTION<sup>6</sup>

Step 1: Define & monitor the problem - understand the who, what, when, where and why associated with the problem

Step 2: Identify risk & protective factors - this step identifies where prevention efforts should be focused

Step 3: Develop & test prevention strategies - implement and vigorously evaluate programs for prevention

Step 4: Assure widespread adoption of evidence-based prevention

### WHAT CAN WE DO TOGETHER?

- The American Academy of Pediatrics advises the safest home for children is one without guns. If the home has a gun the following steps can be taken to increase safety:
  - Use child-proof safety locks and a loading indicator for all firearms in a household with children
  - Enroll in a local firearm safety course
  - Teach your child about firearm safety and answer questions openly and honestly, but do not solely rely on the fact that your child understands what you have taught them on never touching a gun; studies have shown mixed results on how a child reacts to finding a gun when an adult is not present.<sup>7</sup>

### Sources

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