

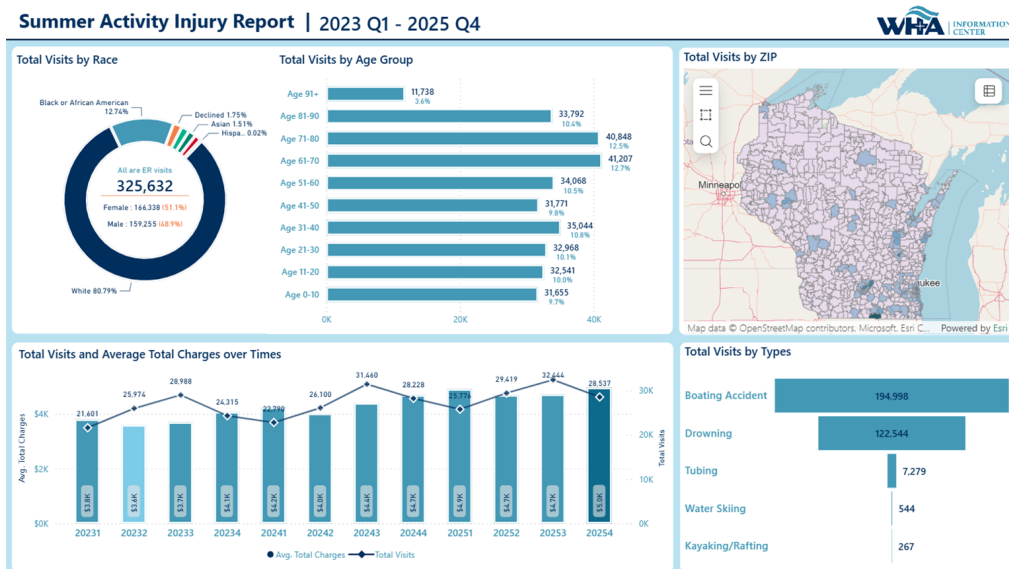
Fast Facts from the WHA Information Center: Summertime Injuries

Summer in Wisconsin brings opportunity to participate in outdoor activities like barbecuing, spending time in the pool or boating on the lake. With more time spent outside, there comes an increased risk of injury.



Kaiser Permanente conducted a study that found a 15-27% increase in visits to the emergency department between Memorial Day and Labor Day. The U.S. Coast Guard reported in 2024 there were 3,887 boating incidents that resulted in 556 deaths, 2,170 injuries and \$88 million in property damage.

The WHA Information Center analyzed emergency department claims data from January 2023- December 2025 to look at demographics and locations of patients who presented for summer activity injuries including boating accidents, drowning, tubing, water skiing and kayaking/rafting. Boating accidents saw the highest number of emergency room visits when compared to other summer activities listed, followed by drowning. More females were seen than men by roughly 7,000 more visits. The percentage of visits sorted by age groups is evenly spread among ages 0 to 90.



Below are some tips on safely enjoying summer's best activities from the National Safety Council:

- **Boating:** Life jackets are at the core of safe boating, whether using a motorized or non-motorized vessel. The U.S. Coast Guard reports 81% of boating deaths in 2021 were due to drowning and 83% of the victims were not wearing a life jacket. Get licensed by taking the National Association of Boating Law Administrators Safety Course. Do not drink and boat as this can cause inhibitions in the driver, leading to accidents and injuries. Pay attention to weather forecasts before heading out on the water and understand boating rules/regulations before going.
- **Swimming safety:** Make sure to never swim alone, avoid dangerous swimming locations and risky conditions and learn basic swimming and water safety.
- **Beat the heat and rays:** Heat kills more than 600 people in the United States each year. Preventing heat-related illnesses, including heat stroke and heat exhaustion, is important for people of all ages, but extreme heat poses the greatest risk for people under age 4 and over 65. The best ways to protect yourself from heat include staying cool, hydrated and informed: find air-conditioning during hot hours, wear cool clothing, drink plenty of liquids and pay attention to heat advisories.
- **Safety tips for water skiers, tubers and wakeboarders:** Skiing, tubing and wakeboarding are popular water sports, but they also can be dangerous with participants traveling at high speeds. Learn how to get up out of the water and how to safely use the tow

rope. Always have a spotter in the boat and go over basic hand signals. Make certain the towline is not caught in the propeller or wrapped around you prior to beginning. Wait for the propeller to stop before getting back on the boat. Enjoy these activities during daylight hours only.

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