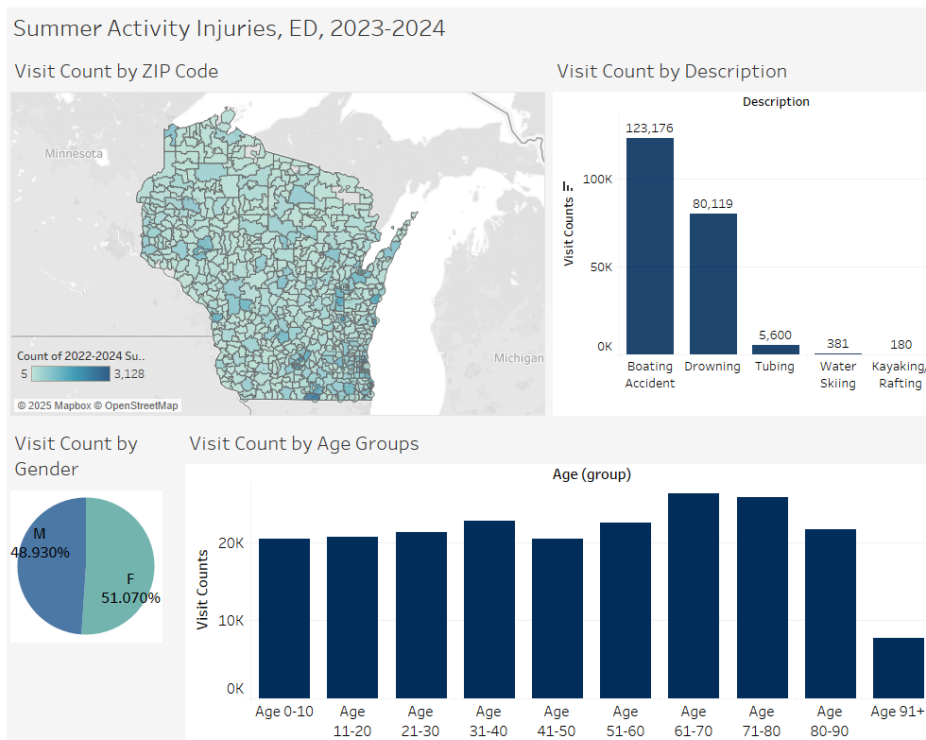


Fast Facts from the WHA Information Center: Summertime Injuries

Everyone knows that summertime in Wisconsin is one of the best seasons, bringing great weather and longer days. Outdoor activities like barbecuing, spending time in the pool or boating on the lake become common activities on the weekends.

With more time spent outside comes an increased risk of injury. Kaiser Permanente conducted a study which found a 15-27% increase in visits to the emergency room department between Memorial Day and Labor Day. In 2024, the U.S. Coast Guard reported 3,887 boating incidents that resulted in 556 deaths, 2,170 injuries and \$88 million in property damage. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission's National Electronic Injury Surveillance System (NEISS) found that between June and August 2023, nearly one million children visited the emergency room.



The WHA Information Center analyzed emergency department claims data from January 2023- December 2024 to look at demographics and locations of patients who presented for summer activity injuries. The summer activities analyzed included boating accidents, drowning, tubing, water skiing and kayaking/rafting. Boating accidents saw the highest number of emergency room visits when compared to the other summer activities, followed by drowning. When analyzing gender, approximately 4,000 more females were seen. The average age of patients visiting the ER for a summer injury was 47 years old. The percentage of visits seen by age group is evenly divided from 0 to 90. This means that no matter your age, summer accidents can happen.

Below are some tips to safely enjoy summer 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 to avoid getting caught in bad weather. Lastly, know 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 and 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 can also 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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