

## Risk Factors

Life is full of risks, but few people have more than a vague idea of actual hazards involved in everyday activities. The table below provides a comparison of the risks of various activities such as smoking or drinking diet soft drinks.

Remember that engaging in any of the activities listed does not mean that you will automatically lose a certain number of days. The table compares average life expectancy with life expectancy given the occurrence of certain events.

These figures merely suggest that the less potential an event or activity has to shorten one's lifespan, the lower the risk.

Loss of Life Expectancy Due to Various Causes			
Cause	Days	Cause	Days
Being unmarried-male	3500	Drowning	41
Cigarette smoking-male	2250	Job with radiation exposure	40
Heart disease	2100	Falls	39
Being unmarried-female	1600	Accidents to pedestrians	37
Being 30% overweight	1300	Safest job-accidents	30
Being a coal miner	1100	Fire-burns	27
Cancer	980	Generation of electricity	24
20% overweight	900	Illicit drugs (U.S. average)	18
< 8th grade education	850	Poison (solid, liquid)	17
Cigarette smoking-female	800	Suffocation	13
Low socio-economic status	700	Firearms accidents	11
Stroke	520	Natural Radiation	8
Living in unfavorable state	500	Medical X-rays	6
Army in Vietnam	400	Poisonous gases	7
Cigar smoking	330	Coffee	6
Dangerous job-accidents	300	Oral contraceptives	5
Pipe smoking	220	Accidents to pedalcycles	5
Increasing food intake 100 cal/day	210	All catastrophes combined	3.5
Motor vehicle accidents	207	Diet drinks	2
Pneumonia-influenza	141	Reactor Accidents-UCS	2
Alcohol (U.S. average)	130	Reactor Accidents-Ras.	0.002
Accidents in home	95	Radiation from nuclear industry	0.02
Suicide	95	PAP Test	- 4
Diabetes	95	Smoke alarm in home	- 10
Being murdered (homicide)	90	Air bags in car	- 50
Legal drug misuse	90	Mobile coronary care units	- 125
Average job-accidents	74	Safety improvements '66-'76	- 110

Taken from Cohen, Bernard L. and Lee. I-sing, "A Catalog of Risks." *Health Physics* (36) 707-722. 1979.

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