



# USA OUTLOOK

*Weekly newsletter* | January 14 to 18



Foto: CNN.com

## Odds of dying from accidental opioid overdose in the US surpass those of dying in car accident

For the first time on record the odds of accidentally dying from an opioid overdose in the United States are now greater than those of dying in an automobile accident. The grim finding comes from the National Safety Council which analyzed preventable injury and fatality statistics from 2017.

The NSC also found the lifetime odds of death for this form of overdose were greater than the risk of death from falls, pedestrian incidents, drowning and fire.

"Too many people still believe the opioid crisis is abstract and will not impact them. Many still do not see it as a major threat to them or their family," said Maureen Vogel, spokeswoman for the National Safety Council told CNN in an email. "These data show the gravity of the crisis. We have known for some time that opioid overdose is an everyday killer, and these odds illustrate that in a very jarring way."

The NSC highlights, however, that the odds given are statistical averages over the whole US population and do not necessarily reflect the chances of death for a particular person from a particular external cause. In addition they are lifetime odds, based on dividing the one-year odds by the life expectancy of a person born in 2017.

In 2018, unintentional injury was found to be the leading cause of death in the US, with more than 61,000 people aged 1 to 44 dying from this cause in 2016 -- nearly twice as many as from cancer and heart disease combined. According to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, these deaths were predominantly a result of motor vehicle accidents and unintentional poisonings.

Last month the CDC reported life expectancy in the United States declined from 2016 to 2017 due to increased drug overdoses and suicides. One study also found that a growing number of children and adolescents in the United States are dying from opioid poisonings.

### Fuente

<https://edition.cnn.com/2019/01/14/health/opioid-deaths-united-states-surpass-road-accidents/index.html>



Foto: WTVA.com

## Ford, VW alliance may create the cars of the future

Ford and Volkswagen announced a long-anticipated plan Tuesday to build vehicles together. The automakers said they have signed an agreement to develop commercial vans and medium-sized pickups beginning as early as 2022. The companies also agreed to "investigate" how they can work together to develop next generation vehicles, such as electric and self-driving cars. Both companies also said they were open to considering additional vehicle programs in the future. The auto industry is racing to develop new technologies and vehicles. Companies are looking for ways to free up billions of dollars to spend on development. Ford has said it anticipates spending \$11 billion restructuring its business in the coming years, while VW has announced that it will spend €44 billion (\$50 billion) by 2023 on an "electric offensive" to develop electric cars, self-driving vehicles and other new technology.

"You can't do this alone," said Ford CEO Jim Hackett at a joint appearance Tuesday. "All these efforts will be enhanced by sharing brainpower." "It is no secret that our industry is undergoing fundamental change, resulting from widespread electrification, ever stricter emission regulation, digitization, the shift towards autonomous driving, and not least changing customer preferences," said Volkswagen CEO Herbert Diess. "In such an environment, it just makes sense to share investment, pool innovation capabilities and create scale effects in clearly defined areas."

Ford is a major player in the US market, second only to GM in terms of sales. But it is not as successful overseas. It struggles to make a profit in Europe where VW is dominant. Ford has a very strong lineup of pickup trucks and SUVs. Its F-150 has been the best selling US vehicle for more than 40 years. But is essentially dropping traditional sedan sales in the United States in the coming years, while VW is still very strong in sedans. Analysts expressed some disappointment during the call because the two sides weren't ready to announce a more definitive agreement on electric and self-driving cars. The two company chiefs assured them that they are moving in that direction, but that it's not as simple to work out the details as it appears from the outside.

### Fuente

<https://edition.cnn.com/2019/01/15/business/ford-volkswagen/index.html>

## America first? Small US stocks are hurting from the trade war

Smaller US-based companies that do most of their business in America were supposed to hold up better than the giants of the Dow and S&P 500 at a time when there are concerns about a shaky global economy.

But the Russell 2000, an index that focuses on small US stocks, has fallen nearly 15% since the start of last October while the Dow and S&P 500 are each down about 10% over the past few months. That's despite the fact that multinationals in the Dow and S&P 500 like Apple (AAPL), Intel (INTC), Boeing (BA) and Nike (NKE) have significant exposure to China and Europe.

Chris Gaffney, president of world markets at TIAA Bank, said investors jumped to the wrong conclusion about how smaller US companies would fare in light of weaker demand from China and other international markets. "Small stocks may not be protected from a trade war after all. Even though many of them may not export products to China, they make supplies for companies that do," he said.

Pal noted that heavy debt loads for big US companies like General Electric (GE), GM (GM) and Ford (F) won't help smaller companies that need to borrow money for expansion. As more US giants get downgraded by the credit ratings agencies, it will be tougher for small firms to get loans. The recent pullback in the value of the US dollar isn't helping either. Smaller US companies benefit when the dollar is stronger since it makes imported goods more expensive than those made in America. "The weakening of the corporate bond market will be a problem for everyone," Pal said. "It could freeze credit for smaller companies."

Many expect the dollar to weaken further as well since there are growing hopes that the Federal Reserve may stop raising interest rates. A series of rate hikes last year helped boost the dollar in the first place. There's also the simple fact that smaller US stocks are riskier than big household names.

According to data from Birinyi Associates, the Russell 2000 is trading at nearly 21 times earnings estimates for the next 12 months, compared to just 15 times the estimates for the Dow and S&P 500. Ragan noted that smaller companies may not be the best place to hide with fears of slowing economic growth rising. So it's only natural for investors to dump smaller stocks that have more room to fall if there is a prolonged downturn.



Foto: CNN.com

Fuente

<https://edition.cnn.com/2019/01/16/investing/small-caps-russell-2000-stocks/index.html>

## Floods, mudslides, wind, blizzards: Thursday will be another wild weather day in California

California will see one more day of wild weather Thursday before a calmer pattern settles in. The Los Angeles Times reported Wednesday night that rock slides near Malibu had closed Malibu Canyon Road, one of the area's primary roadways. The National Weather Service had issued a slew of weather warnings and alerts throughout the state by late Wednesday. High winds, rough surf, floods, mudslides, heavy snow, avalanches and blizzards were all in the forecast.

On Wednesday, a mudslide on a freeway near San Francisco's Golden Gate Bridge snarled morning traffic. Crashes were also reported in Southern California, one of which included 19 vehicles and injured 35 people on Cajon Pass near Victorville. A day earlier, an accident on a rain-slicked road in Placerville, 130 miles east of San Francisco, killed three people. "A powerful Pacific storm will hammer the West Coast into Friday with strong winds, heavy rain and heavy mountain snow," the weather service warned. "Heavy rain will bring a threat of flash flooding along recent burn scars while blizzard conditions are expected in the Sierras."

The weather service issued a flood watch for the northern California county where a wildfire destroyed more than 13,000 homes last year as the state braced for a powerful storm that could trigger deadly mudslides.

The state's Central Valley can expect 1-2 inches of rain, and the foothills could get 2-4 inches. Northern Shasta County and eastern Butte County, home to the fire-ravaged city of Paradise, could see up to 7 inches of rain, the weather service said. The neighboring town of Pulga was under an evacuation warning Tuesday night. Evacuations were ordered Tuesday in Ventura County and other areas hit by recent wildfires. Rainfall rates could reach 0.75 to 1.25 inches per hour, potentially causing mud and debris to flow in burned areas, the weather service warned.

Precipitation will begin to wind down by Thursday night and into Friday morning as the frontal system progresses farther inland, the weather service predicted. The storm will reenergize over the central U.S. on Friday, and will turn into a potent snow event for much of the Midwest and Northeast through Sunday.



Foto: USA Today

Fuente

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2019/01/16/california-mudslides-heavy-rains-threaten-areas-burned-wildfires/2591090002/>



Foto: USA Today

## People choosing not to vaccinate is now a global health threat, says WHO

People who choose not to vaccinate has emerged into a global health threat in 2019, said the World Health Organization. "Vaccine hesitancy," which WHO describes as "the reluctance or refusal to vaccinate despite the availability of vaccines" is among the organization's top global threats for the year, according to a report released Tuesday. WHO said vaccines prevent 2-3 million deaths a year, and improved global coverage on vaccinations could stop an additional 1.5 million deaths annually.

The agency cites measles, which has seen a 30 percent increase in cases worldwide. "The reasons for this rise are complex, and not all of these cases are due to vaccine hesitancy," said WHO in a statement. "However, some countries that were close to eliminating the disease have seen a resurgence."

In the U.S., the number of young children who aren't getting vaccinated is rising. Between 2001 and 2015, the number of unvaccinated babies and toddlers has quadrupled, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Some parents opt not to vaccinate discredited belief vaccines are linked to autism. The CDC says there is no link, and there are no ingredients in vaccines that could cause autism.

Last October, Amanda Cohn, a senior adviser for vaccines for the CDC's National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases, said uninsured children are "highly represented" among kids who don't get vaccines. The U.S.

has seen a surge in the measles, which the CDC had considered eradicated in 2000. Earlier this year, an outbreak of the measles reached more than 100 people and across 21 states.

Among other global health threats to watch this year, according to WHO: air pollution and climate change, noncommunicable diseases such as diabetes and cancer, and the global flu pandemic.