Risk implies uncertainty and is often presented as a probability, such as that of surviving or dying. In many cases, such numbers are not instinctively meaningful. The purpose of risk assessment is to help inform decisions about the hazards causing risks and whether they can be avoided, reduced, or managed. To gain perspective about the magnitude of different risks, it is often useful to compare risks that are calculated in similar ways. See page 267. [Cover illustration by Sharon H. Wolfgang, Washington, DC]