Injuries

Injuries cause suffering, disability and death, but they are often overlooked as a public health issue.

Injuries are grouped as intentional or unintentional. Intentional injuries are injuries that are meant to cause harm to another person or to oneself. Assault, homicide and suicide are examples. Unintentional injuries are injuries that are unplanned. These include motor vehicle crashes, falls and drownings. Most injuries are preventable.

In DeKalb County from 2008 through 2012, injuries were responsible for 19 percent of all emergency room visits, five percent of all hospitalizations and eight percent of all deaths.

Figure 31 shows that in DeKalb County from 2008 through 2012, the rates of emergency room visits, hospitalizations and deaths due to injuries were lower than the rates for Georgia:
- DeKalb County’s rate of emergency room visits was 26 percent lower than Georgia’s rate.
- DeKalb County’s rate of hospitalizations was 13 percent lower than Georgia’s rate.
- DeKalb County’s rate of deaths was 16 percent lower than Georgia’s rate.

Figure 31: Rates of Emergency Room Visits, Hospitalizations and Deaths due to Injuries, DeKalb County and Georgia, 2008-2012

Source: Emergency Room Visits, Hospitalization Discharge and Mortality, Online Analytical Statistical Information System, Office of Health Indicators for Planning, Georgia Department of Public Health, 2015.
As shown in Figure 32, in DeKalb County from 2008 through 2012:
- Falls were the main cause of injuries that resulted in emergency room visits and hospitalizations.
- Motor vehicle crashes were the second leading cause of injury-related emergency room visits and hospitalizations.

**Figure 32: Percentages of Emergency Room Visits and Hospitalizations by Cause of Injury, DeKalb County, 2008-2012**

![Emergency Room Visits and Hospitalizations by Cause](chart)

*Source: Emergency Room Visits and Hospitalization Discharge, Online Analytical Statistical Information System, Office of Health Indicators for Planning, Georgia Department of Public Health, 2015.*

Figure 33 shows that in DeKalb County from 2008 through 2012:
- Homicides were the leading cause of injury-related deaths.
- Motor vehicle crashes were the second leading cause of injury-related deaths.
- Two of the top three injury types resulting in deaths were intentional: homicide and suicide.

**Figure 33: Percentages of Deaths due to Injuries by Cause, DeKalb County, 2008-2012**

![Deaths by Cause](chart)

*Source: Mortality, Online Analytical Statistical Information System, Office of Health Indicators for Planning, Georgia Department of Public Health, 2015.*
INTENTIONAL INJURIES

Homicides
Homicide is defined as the intentional killing of a person by another person. In DeKalb County from 2008 through 2012:

- A total of 432 deaths were the result of homicide.
- The highest rate of homicide deaths was among black males (see Figure 34).
- The rate of homicide deaths among males was seven times the rate of homicide deaths among females.
- The rate of homicide deaths among blacks was five times the rate of homicide deaths among whites.

Figure 34: Rates of Homicide Deaths by Age Group, Race and Sex, DeKalb County, 2008-2012

Note: Homicide death rates are shown by race and sex for age groups that included at least five deaths.
Source: Mortality, Online Analytical Statistical Information System, Office of Health Indicators for Planning, Georgia Department of Public Health, 2015.
The map below (Figure 35) displays homicide death rates based on geographic location in DeKalb County.

**Figure 35: Rates of Homicide Deaths by Geographic Location, DeKalb County, 2008-2012**

*Displayed by Community Health Assessment Area (CHAA)*

Rate per 100,000 population*

- 10 - 12
- 13 - 20
- 21 - 38
- 39 - 47
- 48 - 80

*Rate per 100,000 = Number of cases from 2008-2012 divided by five times the CHAA 2010 population multiplied by 100,000

Created by: Division of Environmental Health and Division of Community Health and Prevention Services, DeKalb County Board of Health (2015).

Sources: Online Analytical Statistical Information System, Office of Health Indicators and Planning, Georgia Department of Public Health; 2010 Census, U.S. Census Bureau; Atlanta Regional Commission
**Assaults**

An assault is when a person physically harms another person on purpose.

Figure 36 shows that in DeKalb County from 2008 through 2012:
- The rate of emergency room visits due to assaults was highest among black males ages 20 to 29 years old.
- The rate of emergency room visits due to assaults was higher among blacks than among whites.

**Violence-related behaviors and high school students**

Certain behaviors among high school students may affect students’ safety. According to the 2013 DeKalb County Youth Risk Behavior Survey:
- The percentage of high school students who had carried a weapon on school property declined from 7.6 percent in 2009 to 6.4 percent in 2013.
- The percentage of students who were in a physical fight on school property in the past 12 months decreased from 19.0 percent in 2010 to 16.8 percent in 2013.
- The percentage of students who had been hit, slapped or physically hurt by their partner declined from 14.6 percent in 2009 to 13.1 percent in 2013.
**What can you do to prevent homicides and assaults?**

- Report suspicious persons and activities to authorities.
- Strengthen community involvement. For example, start a Neighborhood Watch program.
- Increase awareness about the use of gun locks and the safe storage of firearms.
- Reduce children’s and teens’ access to firearms.
- Increase the number of mental health programs that address anger management and bullying.

**Suicides**

Suicide is defined as the act of intentionally taking one’s own life.

In DeKalb County from 2008 through 2012:

- There were 275 suicide deaths.
- The highest rate of suicide was among white males ages 60 through 74 years old (see Figure 37).
- The suicide rate for males was four times higher than the rate for females.

**Figure 37: Rates of Suicide Deaths by Age Group, Race and Sex, DeKalb County, 2008-2012**

Note: Suicide deaths are shown by race and sex for age categories that include at least five deaths. Source: Mortality, Online Analytical Statistical Information System, Office of Health Indicators for Planning, Georgia Department of Public Health, 2015.
The map below (Figure 38) displays suicide death rates based on geographic location in DeKalb County.

**Figure 38: Rates of Suicide Deaths by Geographic Location, DeKalb County, 2008-2012**

Displayed by Community Health Assessment Area (CHAA)

*Rate per 100,000 population = Number of cases from 2008-2012 divided by five times the CHAA 2010 population multiplied by 100,000*

Created by: Division of Environmental Health and Division of Community Health and Prevention Services, DeKalb County Board of Health (2015).

Sources: Online Analytical Statistical Information System, Office of Health Indicators and Planning, Georgia Department of Public Health; 2010 Census, U.S. Census Bureau; Atlanta Regional Commission
Suicidal behaviors and high school students
Table 23 describes suicidal thoughts and attempts among DeKalb County high school students. Table 23 shows that between 2007 and 2013:

- The percentage of high school students who seriously considered attempting suicide increased by 29 percent.
- The percentage of students who actually attempted suicide in the past 12 months increased by 34.8 percent.
- The percentage of students whose suicide attempt in the past 12 months resulted in an injury that had to be treated by a health professional increased by 48.4 percent.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk behavior</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2013</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of students who seriously considered attempting suicide during the past 12 months</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>17.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of students who actually attempted suicide in the past 12 months</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of students whose suicide attempt resulted in injury that had to be treated by health professional in the past 12 months</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: DeKalb County Youth Risk Behavior Survey, DeKalb County Board of Health, 2013.

What can you do to prevent suicide?
- Look for these warning signs:
  - Talking of desire to hurt or kill oneself.
  - Talking or writing about death, dying or suicide.
  - Increasing alcohol or drug use.
  - Feeling hopeless, anxious, agitated or angry.
  - Sleeping too much or too little.
  - Withdrawing from friends, family and society.
- Seek professional counseling.
- Securely store medications and firearms.

Methods used in intentional injuries
Figures 39 and 40 show the methods used in intentional injuries that resulted in emergency room visits, hospitalizations, homicides and suicides.

In DeKalb County from 2008 through 2012:
- Unarmed fights were the leading cause of injury-related emergency room visits.
- Firearms were the most commonly used method in intentional injuries that resulted in hospitalizations and deaths. Firearms were used in:
  - 38 percent of injury-related hospitalizations.
  - 78 percent of homicides.
  - 56 percent of suicides.
**Figure 39: Percentages of Assaults that Resulted in Emergency Room Visits and Hospitalizations by Method, DeKalb County, 2008-2012**

**Emergency Room Visits**
- Unarmed fight: 42%
- Striking by blunt or thrown object: 14%
- Cut/pierce: 8%
- Firearm: 4%
- Other or unspecified: 23%

**Hospitalizations**
- Human bite: 1%
- Rape: <1%
- Child or adult abuse: 1%
- Striking by blunt or thrown object: 13%
- Unarmed fight: 14%
- Cut/pierce: 16%
- Other or unspecified: 17%
- Firearm: 38%

**Source:** Emergency Room Visits and Hospitalization Discharge, Online Analytical Statistical Information System, Office of Health Indicators for Planning, Georgia Department of Public Health, 2015.

**Figure 40: Percentages of Homicides and Suicides by Method, DeKalb County, 2008-2012**

**Homicides**
- Firearm: 78%
- Hanging, strangulation, suffocation: 26%
- Other or unspecified: 10%
- Cut/pierce: 8%
- Poisoning, drugs, medications: 1%
- Bodily force: 1%

**Suicides**
- Hanging, strangulation, suffocation: 26%
- Firearm: 56%
- Other or unspecified: 8%
- Poisoning, drugs, medications: 8%
- Cut/pierce: 2%

**Source:** Mortality, Online Analytical Statistical Information System, Office of Health Indicators for Planning, Georgia Department of Public Health, 2015.
UNINTENTIONAL INJURIES

Falls
In DeKalb County from 2008 through 2012, falls were a leading cause of injury-related emergency room visits, hospitalizations and deaths. They were the cause of:

- 51,675 injuries that resulted in emergency room visits.
- 5,043 injuries that resulted in hospitalizations.
- 194 injuries that resulted in deaths.

In DeKalb County from 2008 through 2012, the rate of hospitalizations due to falls increased with age. See Figure 41. Sixty-nine percent of hospitalizations due to falls occurred among people ages 60 years old and above.

As shown in Figure 42, the hospitalization rate due to falls was highest among whites compared to blacks and Asians. The rate among white women was more than twice the rate of white men.
Figure 43 shows the percentages of falls that resulted in hospitalizations by type of fall in DeKalb County from 2008 through 2012:

- 26 percent of falls were the result of slipping, tripping or stumbling.
- Seven percent of falls were the result of falling on or from stairs, steps or a sidewalk.

**Figure 43: Percentages of Hospitalizations by Type of Fall, DeKalb County, 2008-2012**

- Slipping, tripping, or stumbling: 26%
- On/from stairs, steps or sidewalk: 7%
- One level to another: 6%
- From bed, wheelchair, or furniture: 6%
- From ladder or scaffolding: 4%
- Sports or play related: 2%
- Resulting from striking against another object: 2%
- Unspecified: 43%
- Other: 4%

*Note: “Other” types of falls include falls from commodes, falls due to contact with another person, falls on or from escalators and falls into holes or openings in surfaces (such as storm drains and manholes).*

*Source: Hospitalization Discharge, Online Analytical Statistical Information System, Office of Health Indicators for Planning, Georgia Department of Public Health, 2015.*

What can you do to prevent falls?

- Use caution when wearing loose-fitting shoes and slippers.
- Inform your doctor(s) about all of your prescribed and over-the-counter medications and supplements to prevent or reduce side effects like dizziness.
- Keep working flashlights accessible in all rooms.
- Use caution with area rugs.
- Eliminate tripping hazards. Arrange furniture to create open paths.
- Properly install and use hand rails.
- Mop up standing water and grease on floors.
- Keep sidewalks and exterior steps in good repair. Install hand rails where necessary.

- Parents can:
  - Properly install infant gates at the top and bottom of stairwells.
  - Keep toys off steps and out of main paths.
  - Keep backyard play equipment in good working condition.

- Seniors can:
  - Get an annual eye exam.
  - Develop an exercise routine to improve balance and muscle control. Consult your doctor.
  - Install grab bars in showers and tubs and by toilets.
Motor vehicle crashes
In DeKalb County from 2008 through 2012:

- Motor vehicle crashes were responsible for:
  - 29,375 emergency room visits.
  - 2,099 hospitalizations.
  - 311 deaths.
- The emergency room visit and hospitalization rates due to motor vehicle crashes were highest for the 20 through 29 year old age group (see Figure 44).

Figure 44: Rates of Emergency Room Visits, Hospitalizations and Deaths due to Motor Vehicle Crashes by Age Group, DeKalb County, 2008-2012

As reflected in Figure 45, in DeKalb County from 2008 through 2012, the rates of motor vehicle crash deaths differed by race:

- There was an average of 11.3 deaths per 100,000 blacks.
- There was an average of 5.9 deaths per 100,000 whites.

Figure 45: Rates of Deaths due to Motor Vehicle Crashes by Race and Year, DeKalb County, 2008-2012

Note: Rates were too small to report among Asians, Native Americans and Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders, and Hispanics. Source: Mortality, Online Analytical Statistical Information System, Office of Health Indicators for Planning, Georgia Department of Public Health, 2015.
In DeKalb County from 2008 through 2012:

- The highest rates of motor vehicle crash deaths were among males in the 20 through 29 year old age group and in the 45 through 59 year old age group (see Figure 46).
- The average rate of motor vehicle crash deaths among males of all ages was more than twice the average rate among females of all ages (12.7 deaths per 100,000 males and 5.5 deaths per 100,000 females).

![Figure 46: Rates of Deaths due to Motor Vehicle Crashes by Age and Sex, DeKalb County, 2008-2012](image)

*Note: Rates for ages 0-12 were too low to report.*

*Source: Mortality, Online Analytical Statistical Information System, Office of Health Indicators for Planning, Georgia Department of Public Health, 2015.*

As shown in Figure 47, in DeKalb County from 2008 through 2012:

- Occupants of vehicles other than motorcycles (for example, cars, vans and trucks) were the most common motor vehicle crash victims to be treated in an emergency room or to be hospitalized.
- Pedestrians were hospitalized more often than motorcyclists or pedal cyclists.
- Pedestrians were the most common motor vehicle crash-related fatality victims.

![Figure 47: Percentages of Emergency Room Visits, Hospitalizations and Deaths due to Motor Vehicle Crashes by Person Injured, DeKalb County, 2008-2012](image)

*Note: "Other or unspecified" person injured includes riders of animals and occupants of animal-driven vehicles.*

*Source: Emergency Room Visits, Hospitalization Discharge and Mortality, Online Analytical Statistical Information System, Office of Health Indicators for Planning, Georgia Department of Public Health, 2015.*
**Seatbelt use among adults**

Using a seatbelt is associated with a lower risk of motor vehicle crash injuries. The 2011 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System survey asked adult respondents about seatbelt use. Figure 48 shows seatbelt use among DeKalb County residents.

- Seatbelt use was lowest among males, blacks and people ages 18 through 44 years old.

![Figure 48: Percentages of Adults who Use Seatbelts by Sex, Race and Age Group, DeKalb County, 2011](source)

**Vehicle safety and high school students**

According to the 2013 DeKalb County Youth Risk Behavior Survey, the percentage of high school students who rarely or never wore a seatbelt when riding in a car driven by someone else increased by 38 percent between 2007 and 2013 (see Table 24).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk behavior</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of students who rarely/never wore a seatbelt when riding in a car driven by someone else</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>9.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percentage of students who rode in a car with someone who had been drinking alcohol in past 30 days</td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>19.3</td>
<td>21.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of students who drove a car when they had been drinking alcohol in the past 30 days</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of students who texted or emailed while driving a car in past 30 days</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>22.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of students who talked on a cell phone while driving a car in past 30 days</td>
<td>34.7</td>
<td>32.7</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>26.2</td>
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<td>Percentage of students who rarely/never wore a helmet when they rode a bicycle in the last 12 months</td>
<td>87.3</td>
<td>86.8</td>
<td>86.4</td>
<td>86.2</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Source: DeKalb County Youth Risk Behavior Survey, DeKalb County Board of Health, 2013.*
What can you do to prevent motor vehicle crash injuries?

- Always wear a seatbelt.
- Do not drive if tired.
- Do not text or use a cell phone while driving.
- Do not drive under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- Designate a sober driver, call a cab or remain where you are if you have been drinking.
- Do not get in a car with a driver who has been drinking.
- Look out for motorcyclists, bicyclists and pedestrians.
- Do not exceed posted speed limits.
- Do not drive aggressively.
- Allow enough car lengths in front of you to stop safely.
- Reduce speed in bad weather.
- Properly restrain children up to six years old or recommended weight in an approved child safety seat or booster seat.
- Properly restrain children six to 17 years old in the vehicle’s seat belt.
### FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT INJURIES

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<th>DeKalb County</th>
<th>Metropolitan Atlanta</th>
<th>Georgia and Beyond</th>
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<tbody>
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<td><strong>Intentional Injuries</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Suicide</strong></td>
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<td>National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1.800.273.TALK or 1.800.273.8255 <a href="http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org">http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org</a></td>
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<td>Suicide Prevention Resource Center 877.GET.SPRC or 877.438.7772 <a href="http://www.sprc.org">http://www.sprc.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<th>Falls</th>
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<th>Georgia and Beyond</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Atlanta Area Agency on Aging, AgeWise Connection</td>
<td>404.463.3333</td>
<td>Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Office of Injury Prevention 1.800.232.4636</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Senior Connections</td>
<td>770.455.7602</td>
<td>Georgia Department of Public Health, Injury Prevention Program 404.657.2921</td>
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<td>Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta, Safe Kids Georgia</td>
<td>404-785-7221</td>
<td>National Council on Aging, Falls Prevention 571.527.3900</td>
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<td>Vehicle Safety</td>
<td>DeKalb County Board of Health, Office of Injury Prevention</td>
<td>404.508.7847</td>
<td>Pedestrians Educating Drivers on Safety 404.685.8722</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.dekalbhealth.net/hap/hppu">http://www.dekalbhealth.net/hap/hppu</a></td>
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<td>Center for Pan-Asian Community Services</td>
<td>770.936.0969</td>
<td>AARP 1.888.OUR.AARP or 1.888.687.2277</td>
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<td>CarFit <a href="http://www.car-fit.org">http://www.car-fit.org</a></td>
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<td>Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Office of Injury Prevention 1.800.232.4636</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.cdc.gov/injury">http://www.cdc.gov/injury</a></td>
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<td>Governor’s Office of Highway Safety 1.888.420.0767 or 404.656.6996</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.gahighwaysafety.org">http://www.gahighwaysafety.org</a></td>
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<td>Highway Emergency Response Operator 511</td>
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<td>Mothers Against Drunk Driving 1.877.ASK.MADD or 1.877.275.6233</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.madd.org">http://www.madd.org</a></td>
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<td>National Highway Traffic Safety Administration 1.888.327.4236 or 1.800.424.9153</td>
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<td>Network of Employers for Traffic Safety 1.888.221.0045</td>
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<td>Safe Kids Georgia 404.785.7436</td>
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<td><a href="http://safekidsgeorgia.org">http://safekidsgeorgia.org</a></td>
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<td>Students Against Destructive Decisions 1.888.420.0767 or 404.657.1955</td>
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