

Unintentional Injuries

The consequences of injuries can be extensive and wide-ranging. Injuries have physical, emotional, and financial consequences that can impact the lives of individuals, their families, and society. Some injuries can result in temporary or long-term disability. Injuries also place an enormous burden on hospital emergency departments and trauma care systems, accounting for approximately one-third of all emergency department visits and eight percent of all hospital stays.



Key Facts About Unintentional Injuries

Unintentional injuries are one of the leading causes of death in 15-24 year olds in Dakota County. The rate of non-fatal, unintentional injuries is decreasing. Falls are the leading cause, with older adults most at risk for injury from falls. In Dakota County, student use of seatbelts when driving and riding is increasing. In a national survey, nearly half of bicyclists reported never wearing a helmet. Non-fatal, hospitalized traumatic brain injuries are increasing. Nearly half are caused by falls.

Community
Health
Profiles

Dakota
COUNTY

Deaths and injuries from unintentional injury

- Unintentional injuries caused 115 deaths in Dakota County residents in 2009.
- Unintentional injuries caused an average of nearly 16,000 emergency room visits or hospitalizations per year in Dakota County residents from 2007-2009.
- The rate of non-fatal, unintentional injuries for Dakota County residents decreased by 27 percent from 2001 to 2009.

Injury demographics

- Unintentional injuries were the leading cause of death in Dakota County 15-24 year olds from 2005 to 2009. In 2009, unintentional injuries and suicide were tied for the leading cause of death in this age group.
- The highest rates of non-fatal, unintentional injuries are in persons 75 and older. Persons 75 and older also have the highest rate of death due to unintentional injuries.
- Males have a higher rate of injury than females.

Home safety

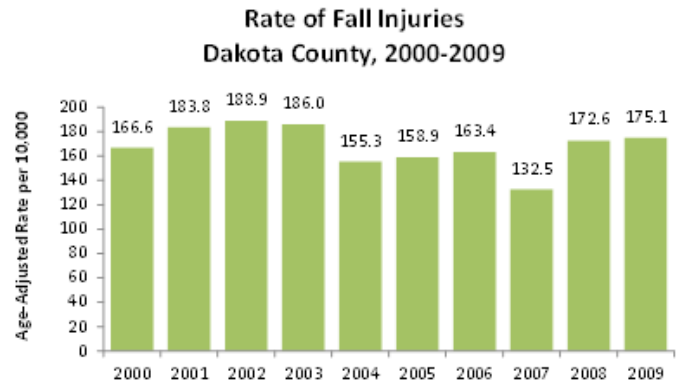
- For Dakota County residents from 2005 to 2009,
 - there were 40 drowning or near-drowning incidents, with two fatalities.
 - there were 86 unintentional injuries from firearms, with one fatality.
 - six people died due to fire.
 - 1,238 accidental poisonings were reported, with one fatality.

Recreational injuries

- Wearing a helmet reduces the risk of brain injury in a crash by 85 percent, but in a 2008 national survey half of bicyclists reported never wearing a helmet or not having access to a helmet.
- Bicycle crashes decreased by six percent in Minnesota from 2009 to 2010.
- Sports injuries are the leading cause of injury treated in emergency departments in Minnesota.

Falls

- Falls are the leading cause of unintentional injuries for Dakota County residents. Seventy-three percent of all fatal injuries and 38 percent of all non-fatal injuries in 2009 were caused by falls.
- The highest rates of fall injuries were in persons 75 and older.
- Females have a higher rate of fall injuries than males.
- The rate of fall injuries for Dakota County residents generally increased from 2004 to 2009.



Source: Minnesota Department of Health, MIDAS

Motor vehicle crashes

- Motor vehicle crashes that occurred in Dakota County caused an average of 20 deaths per year from 2006 to 2010. The rate was above the metro area and below the rate for Minnesota (2008-2010).
- The percent of people injured or killed in car crashes who were not wearing seat belts decreased from 11 to six percent from 2004 to 2007. It remained stable from 2007 to 2009.
- Motor vehicle crashes that occurred in Dakota County caused an average of 2,100 non-fatal injuries per year from 2006 to 2010. Twenty-one percent of injuries were moderate and three percent were severe in 2009.
- The rate of motor vehicle injuries from crashes occurring in Dakota County decreased by 10 percent from 2006 to 2010 and is below the state and metro.

Traumatic brain and spinal cord injuries

- Traumatic brain and spinal cord injuries may lead to long-term disability with multiple secondary conditions.
- There were 236 non-fatal, hospitalized traumatic brain injury (TBI) events for Dakota County residents in 2009. The rate of TBI injuries increased by 24 percent from 2000 to 2009.
- The leading cause of TBI injuries is falls. Persons 75 and older are most susceptible to injury from falls.
- There were an average of 13 non-fatal hospitalized spinal cord injury events per year from 2005 to 2009 for Dakota County residents. The rate fluctuated from the period 2000-2003 to the period 2007-2009.

Automobile safety

- From 2008 to 2010, 521 children under age four were involved in crashes in Dakota County and nine percent were not restrained.
- In Minnesota, seven out of ten child safety seats are used improperly.
- In 2010, 86 percent of Dakota County 9th graders and 87 percent of 12th graders who drive said that they always wear a seatbelt when driving. When riding in a car, 75 percent of 6th and 12th graders, and 71 percent of 9th graders said they always wear a seatbelt. These percentages increased from 1998 to 2010 for all grades.



About this Community Health Profile

For more information about the Dakota County Community Health Assessment and Action Planning (CHAAP) process, contact: Melanie Countryman, Epidemiologist (melanie.countryman@co.dakota.mn.us or 651-554-6131).

For more information:

- Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) www.health.state.mn.us/injury
- Minnesota Department of Public Safety www.dps.state.mn.us/ots
- National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) www.nhtsa.dot.gov
- Safe Kids USA www.usa.safekids.org
- U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) www.cdc.gov/injury



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

TO GOOD HEALTH

www.DakotaCounty.us/PublicHealth

Dakota County Public Health Department
1 Mendota Road West, Suite 410
West St. Paul, MN 55118-4771
651-554-6100

DCPHD-HR-2581 August 15, 2011