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.

Deaths and injuries from unintentional injury
- Unintentional injuries caused 159 deaths in Dakota County residents in 2015.
- Unintentional injuries caused an average of 15,350 emergency room visits or hospitalizations per year in Dakota County residents from 2012 to 2014.
- The rate of non-fatal, unintentional injuries for Dakota County residents decreased by 22 percent from 2005 to 2014.

Injury demographics
- Unintentional injuries were one of the leading causes of death in Dakota County 15–24 year olds from 2011 to 2015.
- The highest rates of non-fatal, unintentional injuries are in persons 75 and older. Persons 75 and older also have the highest rate of fatal unintentional injuries.
- Males have a higher rate of injury than females.

General safety
- For Dakota County residents from 2010 to 2014,
  - there were 26 near-drowning accidents and five accidental drowning deaths.
  - there were 60 non-fatal accidental injuries due to firearms.
  - four people died in fires.
  - there were 1,397 non-fatal accidental poisonings and 155 deaths due to accidental poisoning.

  Note: To protect confidentiality, data on fatal injuries is not reported when the number is small.

Recreational injuries
- Wearing a helmet reduces the risk of severe brain injury in a crash, but in 2015, 81 percent of U.S. 9th–12th graders reported rarely or never wearing a bike helmet. Non-fatal, hospitalized traumatic brain injuries are increasing.
- Bicycle crashes increased by 16 percent in Minnesota from 2014 to 2015.
- An estimated 3,329 sports-related concussions occurred among Minnesota high school athletes in the 2014–15 school year.
Traumatic brain and spinal cord injuries

- Traumatic brain and spinal cord injuries may lead to long-term disability with multiple secondary conditions.
- There were 278 non-fatal, hospitalized traumatic brain injury (TBI) events for Dakota County residents in 2014. The rate of TBI injuries generally increased by 35 percent from 2005 to 2014.
- The leading cause of TBI injuries is falls. Persons 75 and older are most susceptible to injury from falls.

Motor vehicle crashes

- Motor vehicle crashes that occurred in Dakota County caused an average of 15 deaths per year from 2011 to 2015. The rate was below the metro and Minnesota (2013–2015).
- From 2013 to 2015, 29 people who were killed or severely injured in crashes in Dakota County were not wearing seat belts (16 percent of fatal or severe motor vehicle injuries). Nineteen percent of fatal or severe injury crashes involved inattentive driving and 17 percent involved speeding.
- Motor vehicle crashes that occurred in Dakota County caused an average of 1,996 non-fatal injuries per year from 2011 to 2015. Twenty-three percent of non-fatal injuries were moderate and three percent were severe in 2012.
- The rate of motor vehicle injuries from crashes occurring in Dakota County remained stable from 2011 to 2015 and is below the state and metro rates for 2015.

About this Community Health Profile

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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
- U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) www.cdc.gov/injury