

Injuries

OVERVIEW

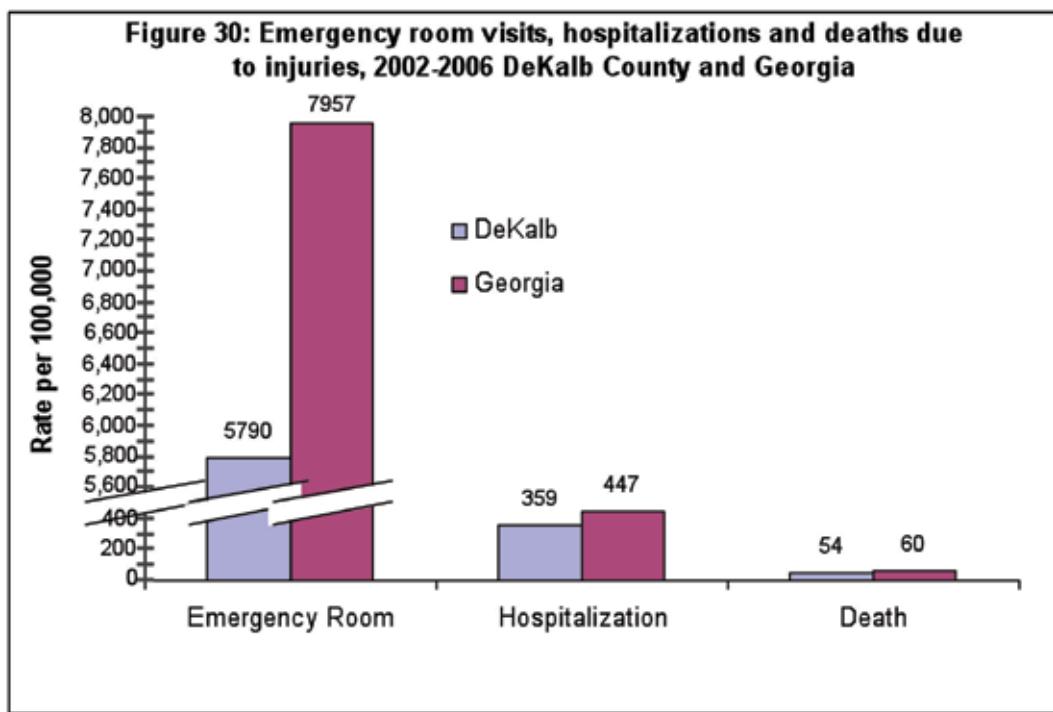
Injuries are a frequently overlooked public health issue. However, injuries cause suffering, disability and death.

Injuries are grouped as intentional or unintentional. Intentional injuries are injuries that are meant to cause harm to another person or to oneself, such as assault, homicide and suicide. Unintentional injuries are injuries that are unplanned, such as motor vehicle crashes, falls and drownings.

Between 2002 and 2006 in DeKalb County, intentional and unintentional injuries were responsible for 21 percent of emergency room visits, four percent of hospitalizations and nine percent of deaths.

Figure 30 shows that in DeKalb County:

- The rate of emergency room visits due to injuries was nearly 30 percent lower than in Georgia.

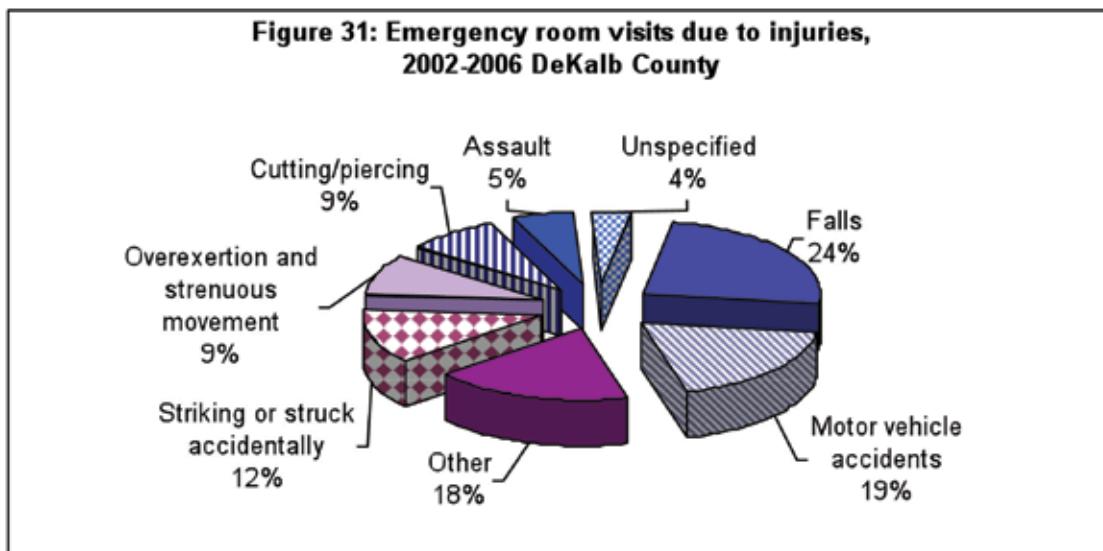


NOTE: The symbol // indicates a break or jump in the scale of the graph since emergency room visit rates are much higher than hospitalizations and death rates.

Source: Online Analytical Statistical Information System (OASIS), Georgia Department of Community Health, Division of Public Health.

In DeKalb County, between 2002 and 2006:

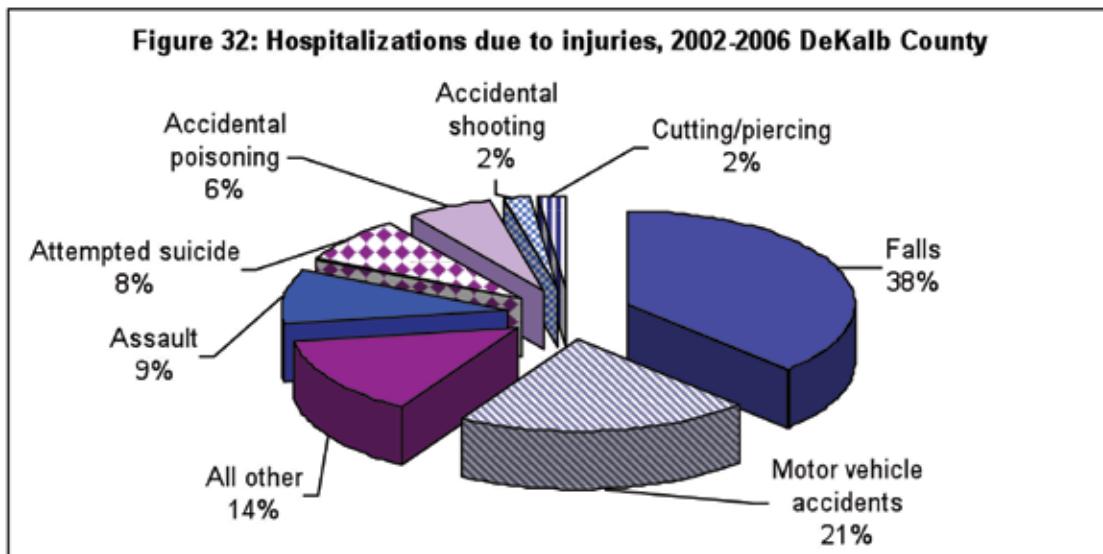
- There were 198,515 emergency room visits due to injuries.
- Falls were the number one cause of injury that resulted in emergency room visits or hospitalizations (Figures 31 and 32). However, they were the fifth leading cause of death (Figure 33).
- Motor vehicle accidents were the second leading cause of injury-related emergency room visits, hospitalizations and deaths (Figures 31 through 33).



Source: Georgia Department of Community Health, Division of Public Health.

In DeKalb County between 2002 and 2006:

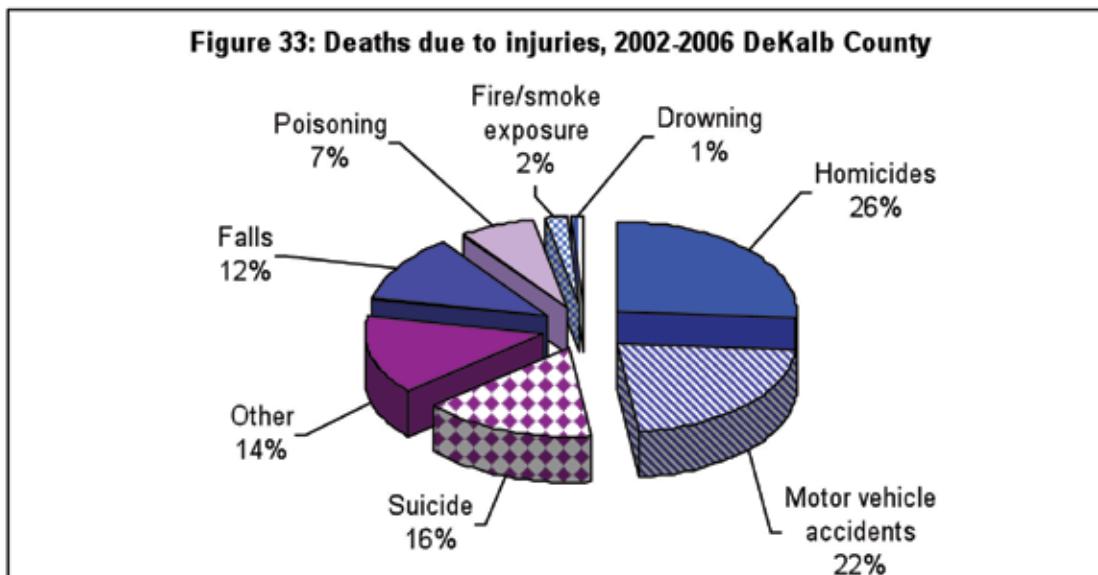
- There were 12,290 hospitalizations due to injuries.
- Forty percent of people who were hospitalized because of a fall-related injury were over 80 years of age.



Source: Georgia Department of Community Health, Division of Public Health.

In DeKalb County between 2002 and 2006:

- There were 1,861 deaths due to injuries.
- Two of the top three injuries resulting in death were intentional injuries: homicide and suicide (Figure 33). Homicide was the top injury-related cause of death, while suicide was the third leading injury-related cause of death.



Source: Online Analytical Statistical Information System (OASIS), Georgia Department of Community Health, Division of Public Health.



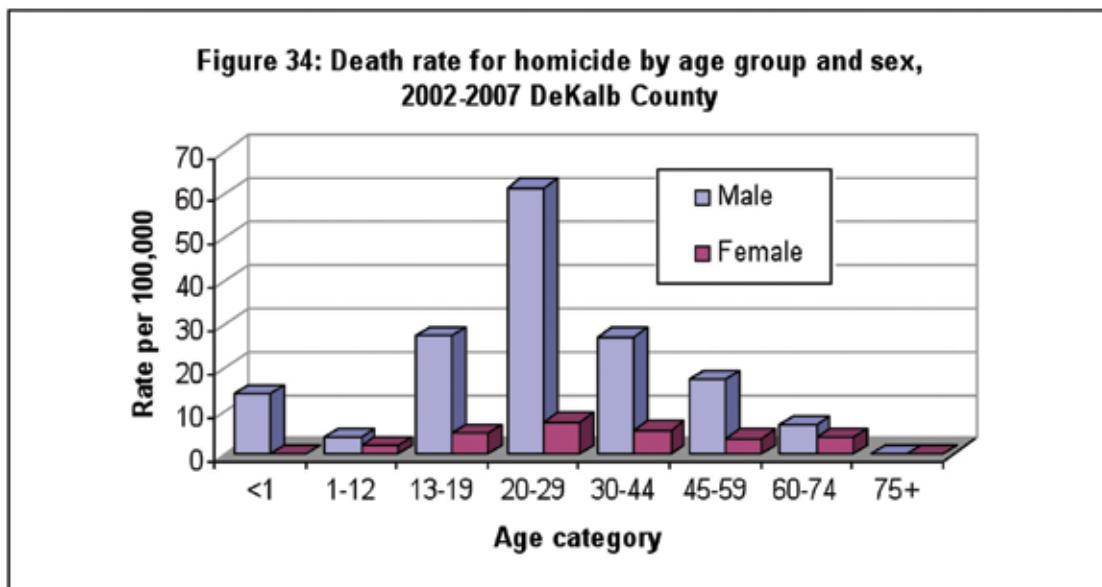
INTENTIONAL INJURIES

Homicide and Assault

Homicide is defined as the intentional killing of a person by another person.

Between 2002 and 2007:

- 579 deaths in DeKalb were the result of homicide.
- The highest rate of homicide in DeKalb County occurred among male victims between 20 and 29 years of age (62/100,000) (Figure 34).
- Males were five times more likely than females to be victims of homicide (Figure 34).
- African Americans were four times more likely than whites to be victims of homicide.
- Firearms were used in 73 percent of homicides (Table 33).



Source: Online Analytical Statistical Information System (OASIS), Georgia Department of Community Health, Division of Public Health.

The table below shows the methods that were used to commit homicide.

Table 33: Deaths due to homicide, 2002-2006 DeKalb County	
Method of Homicide	Percent
Firearm	73
Unspecified/Other	14
Sharp Object	8
Strangulation or Suffocation	3
Child and Adult Abuse	1
Unarmed Fight	1

Source: Georgia Department of Community Health, Division of Public Health.

Assault occurs when a person physically harms another person on purpose. Assaults were reported among the top eight causes for emergency room visits and hospitalizations due to injuries from 2002 to 2006 (Figures 31 and 32). Below are the methods used for reported assaults resulting in emergency room visits and hospitalizations in DeKalb County.

Table 34: Emergency room visits due to assault, 2002-2006 DeKalb County	
Method of Assault	Percent
Unarmed Fight	43
Other and Unspecified	17
Striking by Blunt or Thrown Object	15
Cut/Pierce	10
Human Bite	4
Child and Adult Abuse	4
Firearm	4
Rape	3

Source: Online Analytical Statistical Information System (OASIS), Georgia Department of Community Health, Division of Public Health.

Table 35: Hospitalizations due to assault, 2002-2006 DeKalb County	
Method of Assault	Percent
Firearm	29
Cut/Pierce	22
Unarmed Fight	18
Striking by Blunt or Thrown Object	12
Other and Unspecified	12
Child and Adult Abuse	4
Human Bite	2
Rape	1

Source: Online Analytical Statistical Information System (OASIS), Georgia Department of Community Health, Division of Public Health.

According to the 2009 DeKalb County Youth Risk Behavior Survey, almost 8 percent of high school students carried a weapon on school property, which was a significant increase from five percent in 2003. Violence within boyfriend/girlfriend relationships has significantly increased since 2003 as well (Table 36).

Table 36: Violence among DeKalb County high school students, 2003-2009

Risk Behavior	2003	2005	2007	2009
Carried a weapon on school property*	5.0%	4.9%	7.5%	7.6%
Were threatened or injured with a weapon on school property	7.2%	8.6%	8.1%	9.0%
Were in a physical fight one or more times	37.4%	36.2%	37.0%	34.4%
Were intentionally physically hurt by boyfriend or girlfriend in past 12 months*	10.9%	13.3%	13.0%	14.6%

*Trend is statistically significant.

Source: DeKalb Youth Risk Behavior Survey.

What you can do

- Report suspicious activities and persons to proper authorities.
- Strengthen community involvement. Start a Neighborhood Watch program.
- Increase awareness about the use of gun locks and the proper, safe storage of firearms.
- Reduce the children and teens' access to firearms.
- Increase programs and services for victims of domestic violence.
- Increase mental health programs addressing anger management and bullying.

For more information

- National Center for Victims of Crime: 1-800-FYI-CALL, www.ncvc.org.
- National Teen Dating Abuse Hotline: 1-866-331-9474, www.loveisrespect.org.
- Focus Adolescent Services: 1-410-341-4216, www.focusas.com.
- An Abuse, Rape and Domestic Violence Aid and Resource Collection, Georgia Victim Assistance Resources: www.aardvarc.org/victim/states/gavic.shtml.
- Georgia Coalition Against Domestic Violence: 1-800-33-HAVEN, www.gcadv.org.
- International Women's House: 770-413-5557.

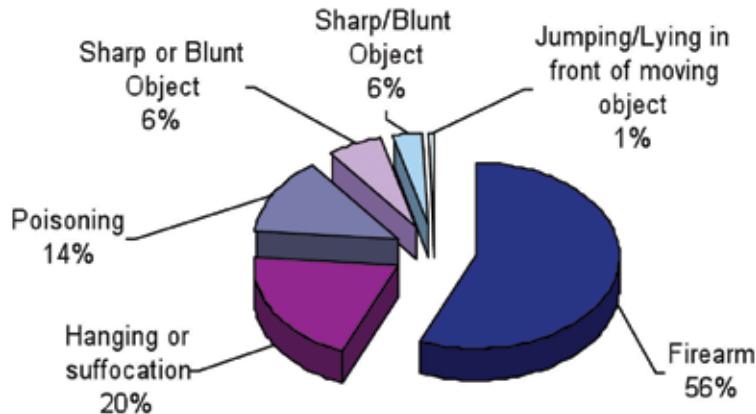
Suicide

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

In DeKalb County:

- 16 percent of injury-related deaths from 2002 to 2006 were the result of suicide (Figure 33).
- 56 percent of deaths were by firearm (Figure 35).
- The rate of suicide for males was nearly five times the rate for females.
- Whites were two times more likely than blacks and four times more likely than Asians to commit suicide.

**Figure 35: Suicide deaths by method of suicide, 2002-2006
DeKalb County**

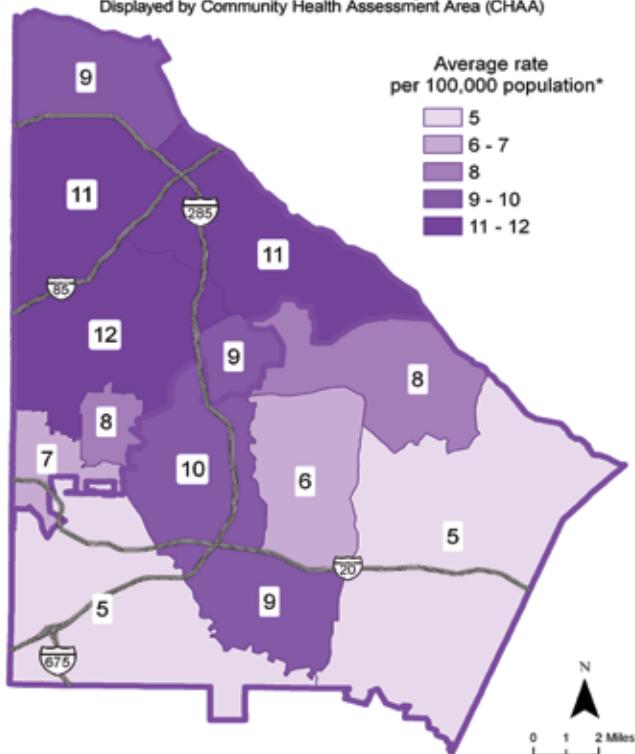


Source: Georgia Department of Community Health, Division of Public Health.

The map below (Figure 36) displays suicide deaths based on geographical location in DeKalb County. (See Methodology for more information.)

**Figure 36: Suicide mortality, 2002-2007
DeKalb County**

Displayed by Community Health Assessment Area (CHAA)



Source: Online Analytical Statistical Information System (OASIS), Georgia Department of Community Health, Division of Public Health; Atlanta Regional Commission.

From 2002 through 2006:

- Of the teens who attempted suicide and were seen in an emergency room, 81 percent chose poisoning (Table 37). Also, 95 percent of teen hospitalizations for attempted suicide were due to poisoning (Table 38).
- 17 teens died by suicide. Poisoning was not a method for any of the completed acts of suicide.

Table 37: Emergency room visits due to attempted suicide by method among teens 13-19 years old, 2002-2006 DeKalb County

Poisoning	81%
Sharp or blunt object	12%
Other and unspecified	4%
Firearm	1%
Hanging or suffocation	1%
Jumping or lying in front of a moving object	1%

Source: Georgia Department of Community Health, Division of Public Health.

Table 38: Hospitalizations due to attempted suicide by method among teens 13-19 years old, 2002-2006 DeKalb County

Poisoning	95%
Sharp or blunt object	2%
Firearm	1%
Jumping or lying in front of a moving object	1%
Other and unspecified	1%

Source: Georgia Department of Community Health, Division of Public Health.

Below are three self-ingested poisoning substances used by teens that can be found in a medicine cabinet, bought over the counter or passed among friends:

- Analgesics (ibuprofen, Percocet, Vicodin) treat pain.
- Antipyretics (aspirin, acetaminophen) treat fever.
- Antirheumatics (naproxen) treat joint inflammation.

Of teens' emergency room visits due to attempted suicide by poisoning (Table 37), 41 percent used substances that could be found in a medicine cabinet, over the counter or passed among friends (Table 39).

Table 39: Poisoning drugs used to attempt suicide and resulted in emergency room visit among teens 13-19 years old, 2002-2006 DeKalb County

	%
Analgesics, antipyretics, antirheumatics	41
Other drugs & medicinal substance	28
Tranquilizers & other psychotropic agents	17

Source: Georgia Department of Community Health, Division of Public Health.

Of teens' hospitalizations due to attempted suicide by poisoning (Table 38), 50 percent used substances that could be found in a medicine cabinet, over the counter or passed among friends (Table 40).

Table 40: Poisoning drugs used to attempt suicide and resulted in hospitalization among teens 13-19 years old, 2002-2006 DeKalb County

	%
Analgesics, antipyretics, antirheumatics	50
Tranquilizers & other psychotropic agents	23
Other drugs & medicinal substances	20

Source: Georgia Department of Community Health, Division of Public Health.

Based on the Youth Risk Behavior Survey, DeKalb County high school students are increasingly thinking about and attempting suicide (Table 41). Although trends from 2003 to 2009 are not statistically significant, the increases over time may warrant further research, discussion and prevention education.

Table 41: Depression and suicidal thoughts among DeKalb County high school students, 2003-2009

Risk Behavior	2003	2005	2007	2009
Felt so sad or hopeless almost every day for two weeks or more in a row that they stopped doing some usual activities during the past 12 months	28.5%	27.3%	26.5%	30.8%
Seriously considered attempting suicide during the past 12 months	13.7%	13.4%	13.3%	14.5%
Made a plan about how they would attempt suicide during the past 12 months	10.7%	11.7%	12.2%	11.9%
Actually attempted suicide one or more times during the past 12 months	7.4%	9.9%	8.9%	9.3%
Made a suicide attempt during the past 12 months that resulted in an injury, poisoning or overdose that had to be treated by a doctor or nurse	2.6%	2.8%	3.1%	3.6%

Source: DeKalb Youth Risk Behavior Survey.

Know the warning signs.

- If someone is threatening to hurt/kill oneself or talking of wanting to hurt/kill oneself.
- If someone is looking for ways to kill oneself by seeking access to firearms, pills or other means.
- If someone is talking/writing about death, dying or suicide, when these actions are out of the ordinary.
- If there is increased substance (alcohol or drug) use.
- If someone feels there is no reason for living, has no sense of purpose in life.
- If someone is anxious, agitated, unable to sleep or sleeping all the time.
- If someone has feelings of being trapped, like there is no way out.
- If someone feels hopeless or sad (depressed).
- If someone withdraws from friends, family and society.
- If someone shows rage or uncontrolled anger or is seeking revenge.
- If someone is acting reckless by engaging in risky activities, seemingly without thinking.
- If someone has dramatic mood changes.

What you can do

- Keep all medications securely locked away.
- If you or someone you know has any of the above warning signs, speak up. Confide in someone, listen and get help.

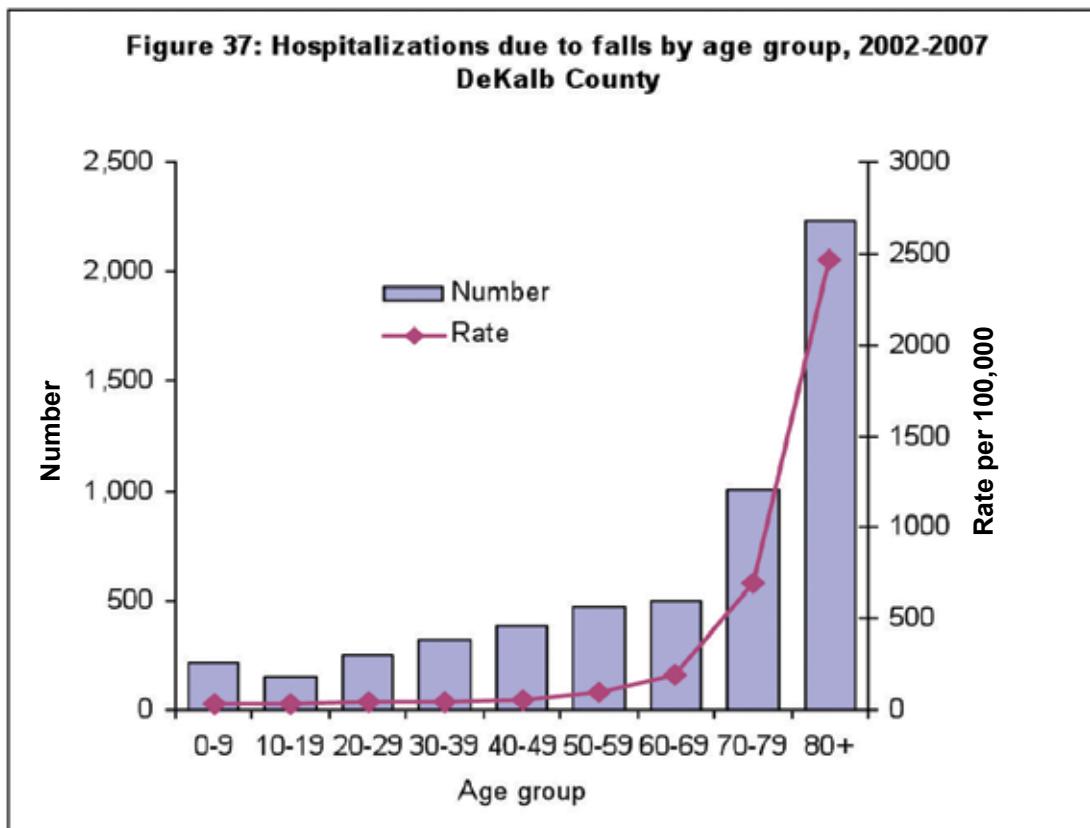
For more information

- American Association of Suicidology: www.suicidology.org.
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control: www.cdc.gov/injury.
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255).
- Suicide Prevention Resource Center: www.sprc.org.

UNINTENTIONAL INJURIES

Falls

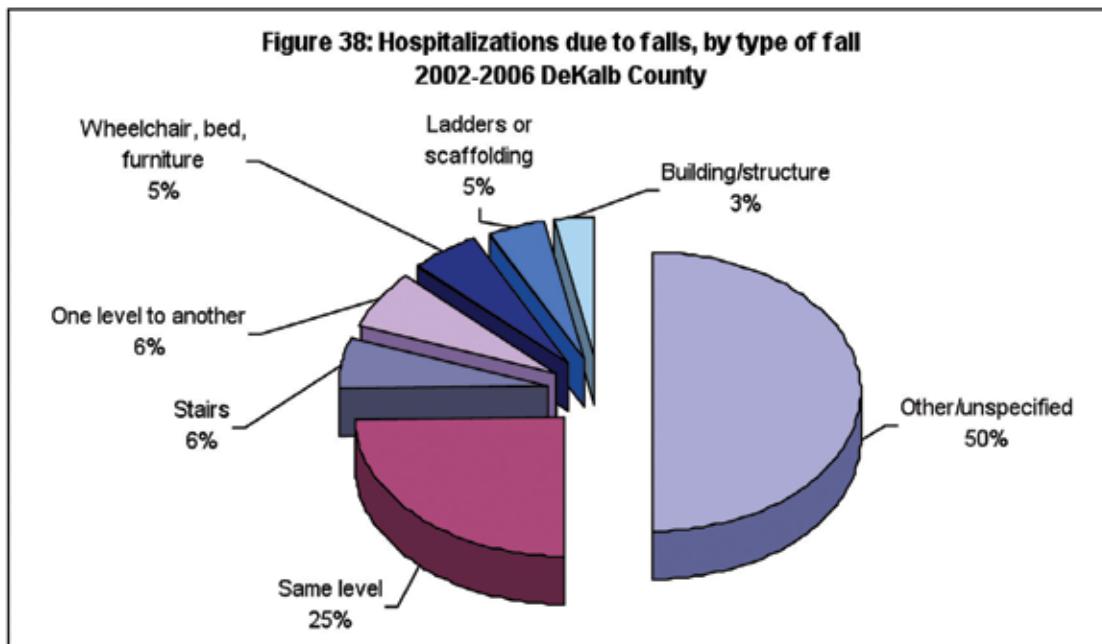
Injuries from falls resulted in over 10,000 emergency room visits and hospitalizations and nearly 45 deaths each year from 2002 through 2007. Figure 37 below shows the age groups in which most hospitalizations due to falls occur. Sixty-seven percent of hospitalizations and 80 percent of deaths from falls occurred among persons 60 years of age or older.



Source: Online Analytical Statistical Information System (OASIS), Georgia Department of Community Health, Division of Public Health.

Of the falls in DeKalb County from 2002 through 2006 (Figure 38):

- Half of those that resulted in hospitalization were classified as having “other” or “unspecified” causes.
- Of the falls where the cause was specified, 25 percent were falls on the same level. Falls on the same level include slipping, tripping, stumbling, running into another person (for example, during a sports activity) or falling from a skateboard.



Source: Georgia Department of Community Health, Division of Public Health.

According to the 2007 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Survey, 13 percent of DeKalb County adults said they have fallen one to five times in the past year and 27 percent suffered injuries from the fall.

What you can do to prevent falls

- Properly install, secure and use hand rails.
- Use bright lights in halls and other rooms.
- Use caution with area rugs.
- Mop up standing water and grease on floors.
- Arrange furniture to provide an open path.
- Properly install infant gates at the top and bottom of stairwells.
- Install screens on all windows.
- Keep toys off steps and main paths in the home.
- Keep working flashlights easily accessible in all rooms.
- Keep exterior sidewalks and steps in good repair, free from cracks and breaks in the concrete. Install hand rails where necessary.

What you can do in recreational settings

- Keep backyard playground equipment in good working condition.
- Check all equipment prior to use to ensure none is damaged, worn, rusted or missing pieces.
- Check playground surfaces for damage, holes and dips.

What seniors can do

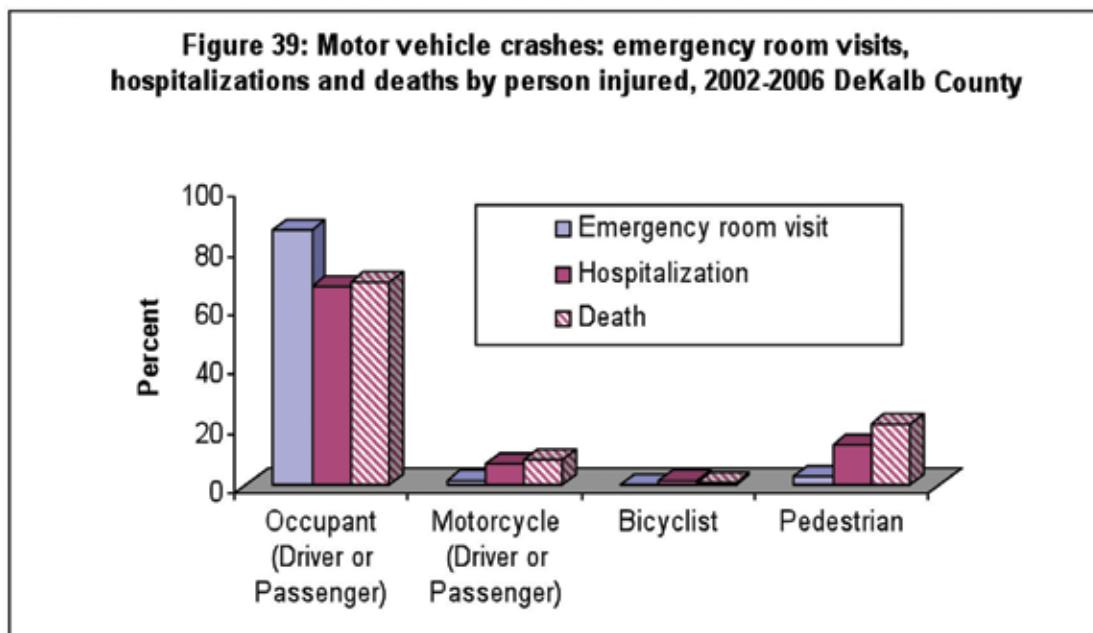
- Use caution with loose-fitting shoes and slippers.
- Keep rooms and hallways well lit when in use at night.
- Have an annual eye exam.
- Prevent drug interactions by alerting your doctor and pharmacist to all of your prescribed and over-the-counter medications and supplements.
- Discuss developing an exercise regime with your doctor that emphasizes balance and muscle control.
- Install grab bars in showers and tubs and by toilets.

Motor Vehicle Crashes

Between 2002 and 2006, motor vehicle crashes were:

- The leading cause of death for persons ages 1 to 34.
- Responsible for 37,038 emergency room visits, 2,577 hospitalizations and 418 deaths among DeKalb County residents.

Most often, the person injured was either the driver or passenger of a vehicle involved in an accident. Bicyclists (pedal cyclists) were least likely to be involved in motor vehicle crashes (Figure 39).



Source: Online Analytical Statistical Information System (OASIS), Georgia Department of Community Health, Division of Public Health.

According to the 2009 DeKalb County Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 8.9 percent of high school students rarely or never wore a seatbelt when riding in a car driven by someone else, a significant increase since 2003 (Table 42).

Table 42: Vehicle safety among DeKalb County high school students, 2003-2009

Risk Behavior	2003	2005	2007	2009
Rarely or never wore a seat belt when riding in a car driven by someone else*	5.4%	6.6%	6.8%	8.9%
Rode one or more times during the past 30 days in a car or other vehicle driven by someone who had been drinking alcohol	24.4%	19.9%	21.0%	22.9%
Drove a car or other vehicle one or more times during the past 30 days when they had been drinking alcohol	4.9%	4.9%	4.6%	4.3%
Rarely or never wore a bicycle helmet while riding their bicycle during the past 12 months	86.7%	87.3%	87.3%	86.8%

* Trend is statistically significant.

Source: DeKalb Youth Risk Behavior Survey.