

Some things you need to know about young people

Myth: If a suicidal youth tells a friend, the friend will tell an adult.

Fact: Most suicidal young people do not tell an adult.

Good Friends Don't Keep Deadly Secrets

Warning signs to look for in young people:

- Change in interaction with family and friends
- Recent disappointment or rejection
- Sudden decline or improvement in academic performance
- Physical symptoms: eating disturbances, changes in sleep patterns, chronic headaches, stomach problems, menstrual irregularities
- Increased apathy
- Being expelled from school /fired from job
- Family problems/alienation
- Feeling embarrassed or humiliated in front of peers
- Victim of assault or bullying

Some things you need to know about suicidal young people:

1. Many young people are reluctant to seek or accept help for any problem, including suicide. This seems to be especially true for males. Part of this may be due to the fact that males often feel less comfortable than females in talking about their problems or feelings. Therefore, if you are at all suspicious that a teenaged boy or young man may be suicidal, be bold and persistent in your efforts to be helpful.
2. In general, boys and young men are less likely to recognize their own symptoms of depression or to seek treatment when they feel bad. Instead, they often drink heavily or use drugs to try to feel better. Boys also tend to use firearms or other highly lethal means to kill themselves.
3. While girls and young women are almost twice as likely to suffer from depression, their depressive illness may be less impulsive and violent than depression in boys. Perhaps as a result, boys complete suicide much more frequently than girls.
4. Lastly, adolescent boys and young men are more likely than girls to have experienced a crisis sometime in the 24 hours prior to a suicide attempt (especially in relation to break-ups with girlfriends, disciplinary problems, legal crises or humiliating events).

Because young people of both sexes may not be getting treatment for depression, and may abuse drugs and alcohol and act impulsively on suicidal thoughts and feelings, it

is critical that QPR be applied *quickly* when suicide warning signs are seen or suicidal communications intercepted. Remember, if you can't ask the suicide question, find someone who can.

Sources:

Centers for Disease Control, Atlanta, Georgia, USA

Dr. Silvia Sara Canetto, "*Meanings of gender and suicidal behavior during adolescence*", *Journal of Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior*, Winter, 1997, 27(4):339-351

Dr. Kay Redfield-Jamison in her book, *Night Falls Fast*, 1999

Dr. David Schaffer, Columbia University, New York, NY

Utah Youth Suicide Facts

2nd!
leading cause
of death for
ages 10-17¹

In 2011,
enough Utah
students
seriously consid-
ered attempting
suicide to fill
740 classrooms^{2*}

Utah ranks
5th
in the nation for
youth suicide
deaths³

*Based on an average classroom size of 30 students

In an average classroom size of 30...



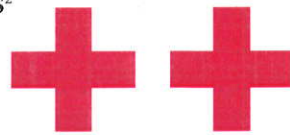
8 will report feeling sad and hopeless²



4 will have seriously considered suicide²



4 will have made a suicide plan²

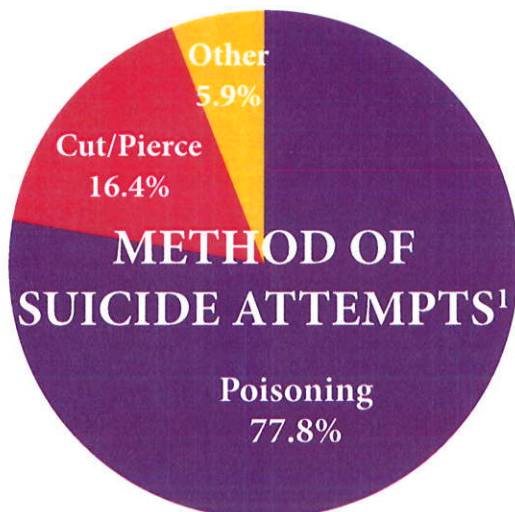


2 will have attempted
suicide one or
more times²



1 will have had
medical treatment
for a suicide attempt²

598 YOUTH ATTEMPTED SUICIDE IN 2011¹



7 out of 10 youth
suicide attempts are girls¹



7 out of 10 youth
suicide deaths are boys¹



¹Other includes fall, fire/flame/smoke, firearm, motor vehicle traffic other & unspecified, and suffocation.



For more information visit:
www.health.utah.gov/vipp



1. Utah Department of Health Indicator-based Information System for Public Health, 2011
2. Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2011 and USOE public high school enrollment, school year 2011-2012
3. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System, 2010

RULES TO FOLLOW

IF YOU HAVE FIREARMS IN YOUR HOME

- Store guns safely and securely when not in use.
- As appropriate for your situation, store ammunition in a separate securely locked container.
- Keep the keys where children and others cannot find them.

The storage method chosen must provide an adequate level of protection to prevent unauthorized persons from accessing the firearms. Different types of locking mechanisms offer varying degrees of security and accessibility. Some storage methods include keyed locks, combination locks, lock boxes, firearm safes, etc.

You should consider securing your firearms, even if you don't have children, due to the possibility of theft. Firearms are a favorite target of burglars, and professional thieves know all the hiding places that you may think of.

Basic Firearm Safety Rules

1. Treat all firearms as if they are loaded.
2. Always keep your finger off the trigger until your sights are on target and you have made the decision to fire.
3. Never point a firearm at anything you are not willing to shoot/destroy.
4. Know your target, your target's environment, and any other safety hazard before you fire.

Other Safety Rules / Range Safety Rules

- Know how to use the firearm safely.
- Ensure the firearm is safe to operate.
- Use the correct ammunition for your firearm.
- Wear eye and ear protection appropriately.
- **Never** use alcohol or drugs before or while shooting. Alcohol and any other controlled substances will impair normal mental or physical bodily functions.
- **Never** handle a firearm in an emotional state such as anger or depression.



Call for help if you or someone you know has thought about or expressed suicidal thoughts.

HELP is available 24 hours a day 7 days a week.

If you live in Utah, call the Statewide Crisis Line at (801) 587-3000 or at 1-800-273-TALK (8255).

In case of emergency call 911 or visit your local emergency room.



publicsafety.utah.gov
www.utahsuicideprevention.org
www.health.utah.gov/vipp
www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org
www.utahshootingsscouncil.org

This brochure is not intended to be a complete course on firearm safety/suicide prevention and is not a substitute for formal, qualified instruction in the handling, using or storing of firearms. Rather this brochure is a resource to promote firearm safety and to minimize the chance of an accident occurring, along with providing information on suicide prevention.



WHAT WE ALL NEED TO KNOW

The Definition of Firearm Safety

A collection of rules and recommendations that can be applied when possessing, storing, or handling firearms. The purpose of firearm safety is to eliminate or minimize the risk of unintentional death, injury, or damage caused by improper possession, storage, or handling of firearms.

FIREARM OWNERSHIP

From the moment you decide to own a firearm, you are not just exercising your right, but taking the responsibility to use that firearm in a legal manner, rationally, intelligently, and safely at all times, without exception.

According to federal statistics, there are firearms in approximately half of all U.S. households. Even if you do not have a firearm in your home, chances are that someone you know does.

It is important firearm owners follow safety precautions while handling and storing their firearms, not just for their own safety, but for the safety of their families and the general public.

Understanding Your Firearm

Before handling a new firearm you should know how to properly load, unload and clear a malfunction from your firearm. Not all firearms are mechanically the same. Never assume that what applies to one make or model exactly applies to another.

The mechanical safety device of a firearm is never foolproof: The safety device can never replace safe firearm handling. Before cleaning your firearm, make absolutely sure it is unloaded. The action should be open during the cleaning process and no ammunition should be present in the cleaning area.

Seek Proper Instruction

To obtain instruction regarding the operation of your firearm you should do the following before attempting to use a firearm:

- Speak to a reputable firearms dealer.
- Speak to the manufacturer directly.
- Read and understand the owner's manual.
- Attend a reputable firearms safety handling course.

Prohibited Persons

Federal law prohibits the purchase and possession of firearms by people who fall within certain categories; such as convicted felons, domestic abusers, and people with specific kinds of mental health histories.

For more in depth information on the federal disqualifying offenses refer to the federal Gun Control Act of 1968 at 18 U.S.C. § 922. For State of Utah disqualifying offenses refer to Utah Code Ann. § 76-10-503.

KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE

Children should be taught what to do if they come across a firearm without an adult present. To counter the natural impulse to touch a firearm, it is imperative that you impress these safety steps to your children.

Steps For Children

- STOP
- DON'T TOUCH
- LEAVE THE AREA
- TELL A RESPONSIBLE ADULT

Steps For Parents

- Relate firearm safety rules to children.
- Emphasize that a firearm should never be used without adult supervision.
- Practice firearm safety with your children.
- Emphasize to children that firearms aren't toys.
- Teach the difference between real guns and toy guns.
- Teach children how to properly identify a firearm and avoid unsafe situations.

It's essential that you instill a mindset of safety and responsibility to ALL members of the household. Families that own firearms for recreational purposes or for hunting should explain the proper use of a firearm and hunting related firearm safety.

UTAH SUICIDE FACTS

- Suicide is the 6th leading cause of death in Utah
- Utah ranks 7th in the nation for suicides
- Utah ranks 5th in the nation for youth suicide deaths
- It's the 2nd leading cause of death for ages 10-17
 - In an average classroom size of 30...
 - 8 will report feeling sad and hopeless
 - 4 will have seriously considered suicide
 - 4 will have made a suicide plan
 - 2 will have attempted suicide one or more times
 - 1 will have had medical treatment for a suicide attempt

PREVENTING SUICIDE

Suicide Warning Signs

Listed below are signs that someone may be at risk for suicide. Risk is greater if a behavior is new or has increased.

- Talking about wanting to die or kill oneself.
- Looking for a way to kill oneself, such as searching online or buying a gun.
- Talking about feeling hopeless, having no reason to live, being trapped, in unbearable pain, or about being a burden to others.
- Increasing the use of alcohol or drugs.
- Acting anxious or agitated; behaving recklessly.
- Sleeping too little or too much.
- Withdrawing or feeling isolated.
- Showing rage or talking about seeking revenge.
- Displaying extreme mood swings.
- Experiencing relational, social, work, or financial loss.

What To Do

- Take any threat of suicide seriously.
- Do not leave the person alone.
- Listen to and don't judge anyone you think may be in trouble.
- Take action.

Suicidal crises are often time limited. Taking safety precautions can help save a life.

FIREARMS—Lock, Limit, Remove

- Store guns safely and securely when not in use.
- Consider temporary off-site storage, if a family member may be suicidal. Friends along with some gun shops or police departments may be willing to store them for you temporarily.

MEDICATIONS—Lock, Limit, Remove

- **Never** keep lethal doses on hand. A pharmacist can advise you on safe quantities of medications.
- Lock up medications. Properly dispose of medications when no longer needed.
- Remove medications from the home when a family member may be suicidal.

SUPPORT—Listen and Ask

- Be aware of the warning signs of suicide, which are not always obvious.
- Pay attention to the moods and behavior of your family and friends.
- Ask family and friends if they're thinking about suicide and get them help, if you notice significant changes in moods and behavior.

Utah Health Status Update:

Risk and Protective Factors for Youth Suicide

February 2015

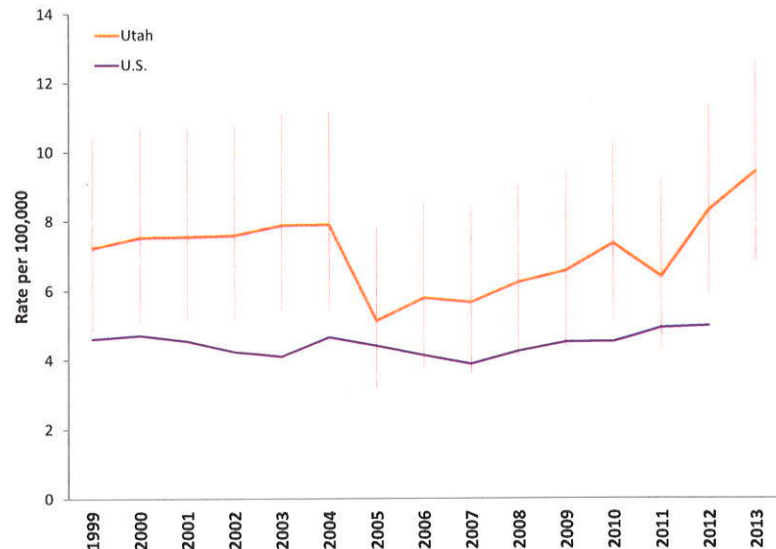
In 2013, suicide surpassed unintentional injuries to become the leading cause of death among youth ages 10–19 in Utah. On average, 37 youth in Utah die from suicide and 942 are injured in a suicide attempt each year.^{1,2} The youth suicide rate in Utah is consistently higher than the U.S. rate, and has been increasing for nearly a decade (Figure 1).

Utah's largest school health and risk behavior survey, the Prevention Needs Assessment, is conducted biennially (odd-numbered years) in schools throughout the state among students in junior, middle, and high schools. The survey assesses health-related behaviors and factors among a random sample of 6th, 8th, 10th and 12th grade students in Utah's public

- On average, 37 youth in Utah die from suicide and 942 are injured in a suicide attempt each year.^{1,2}
- According to the 2013 Prevention Needs Assessment survey, 14.1% of students in grades 8, 10, and 12 reported that during the past year they had seriously considered suicide.
- Higher rates of suicide ideation were reported among students who were tenth graders, females, in Tooele County, living with adults who had not graduated from high school, bullied more than once in the past year, and heavy electronics users.
- Students who had been bullied both at school and electronically were at especially high risk, being 5.8 times more likely to have considered suicide.
- A lower risk of suicide ideation was found among students who regularly attended religious services or activities and regularly ate a meal with their family.
- Even among those who had experienced an episode of depressive symptoms in the previous year, students reporting religious involvement and family mealtimes were still less likely to have considered suicide in the past year.

Youth Suicide Rates

Figure 1. Suicide fatalities per 100,000 population ages 10–19, Utah and U.S., 1999–2013



Source: Utah Death Certificate Database, Office of Vital Records and Statistics, Utah Department of Health; CDC WISQARS

Suicide Ideation by Demographics

Table 1. Percentage of students in grades 8, 10, and 12 reporting suicide ideation by selected demographic characteristics, Utah, 2013

Demographic Characteristics	% Reporting Suicide Ideation	95% Confidence Interval	
8th, 10th, and 12th graders	14.1	13.4	14.9
Sex			
Male	10.6	9.9	11.3
Female	17.8	16.6	19.1
Grade			
8th	13.3	12.3	14.3
10th	15.9	14.7	17.0
12th	13.2	12.2	14.1
Race/Ethnicity			
White, non Hispanic	13.8	12.9	14.7
Other race or ethnicity	15.6	14.5	16.7
Highest Household Education			
No high school diploma	20.6	18.1	23.1
High school grad/some college	16.8	15.7	17.9
College grad or beyond	11.6	10.7	12.5

Source: 2013 Prevention Needs Assessment

and charter schools. Analysis of the 2013 survey is based on data from 33,214 respondents in grades 8, 10, and 12.

Suicide ideation—thinking about suicide, having suicidal thoughts, or considering attempting suicide—is a risk factor for suicide. According to the 2013 survey, 14.1% of students in grades 8, 10, and 12 reported that during the past year they had seriously considered suicide. Tenth graders