

Reducing Weapon Injuries

HEALTH GOAL

- I will follow guidelines to help reduce the risk of weapon injuries.

Devices used for fighting, or **weapons**, are widely available in society. In the past few years, almost one in five high school students reported carrying a gun, knife, or club to school or elsewhere. Teens are more likely to use weapons to solve disagreements today than they were in the past. This lesson includes ways to reduce the risk of being injured by a weapon. This lesson also emphasizes the risks associated with being unsafe around guns.



What You'll Learn

1. Discuss laws regarding the sale of handguns and rifles to teens. (p. 705)
2. Analyze strategies for avoiding injury from weapons. (p. 705)
3. Discuss laws regarding carrying a concealed weapon. (p. 705)
4. Analyze how not carrying a weapon can help prevent accidental and deliberate injuries. (p. 706)
5. Discuss how a gun should be safely stored in a home. (p. 706)
6. Discuss safety actions you should take if you see a gun that is not safely locked up. (p. 706)

Why It's Important

It is important that teens know the laws pertaining to weapons in their state in order to be safe around weapons. It also is important that teens know actions they can take to be safe around weapons.

Key Terms

- weapons
- concealed weapons

What Would You Do?

Writing About Weapons Suppose you overhear two teens from your school talking about slipping a hunting knife into school through an open window. They say they just want to scare someone with it. After you read the information on weapons and safety on page 705, brainstorm the possible consequences of their actions in your health journal.



Health TEKS covered by Lesson 68: 2B, 5D, 7E, 7F, 15A, 16A, 16D, 17B

Weapons and Safety

Guns, knives, razor blades, pipe bombs, brass knuckles, clubs, and stun guns are examples of weapons. Guns are the type of weapon most likely to be used to harm teens.



What to Know About Weapons

Gun laws The Youth Handgun Safety Act, part of the Omnibus Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994, federally prohibits the possession of a handgun or ammunition by a person under the age of 18, or the private transfer of a handgun or ammunition to a juvenile. The law includes a number of exceptions, such as possessing a firearm for farming, hunting, and other specific uses. Some states have established different age limits. There is no federal minimum age for possession of a long gun (rifle or shotgun).

Laws on carrying **concealed weapons**, or weapons partially or fully hidden from view, specify the conditions under which individuals may carry weapons in public. These laws include weapons such as guns, knives, and clubs, and vary widely from state to state. Some states prohibit carrying concealed weapons. In most states, a concealed weapons permit is required to carry a weapon.

The Gun-Free Schools Act requires school districts to have policies that require any student who brings a firearm to school to be expelled from school. This act also requires that these students be referred to the criminal justice or juvenile delinquency system.

Carrying a weapon can increase the risk of injury. Teens sometimes carry guns or other weapons (with parental

permission) to hunt animals or to go target shooting. However, there are many situations in which it is unsafe for a teen to carry a weapon.

Carrying a gun increases the risk of injury due to accidental discharge. In 2000, nearly 14 percent of deaths due to accidental discharge of firearms occurred in teens ages 15-19.

Carrying a weapon also increases the risk that it will be used to settle a disagreement or fight. Teens who carry a weapon might use the weapon if they get into a fight. If they had not had the weapon, they might have settled their disagreement in a more rational way.

Carrying a weapon also increases the risk of it being used in a crime. A person who is carrying a weapon might have it stolen from them and used in a crime, or a teen might use it in a crime.



Did You Know?

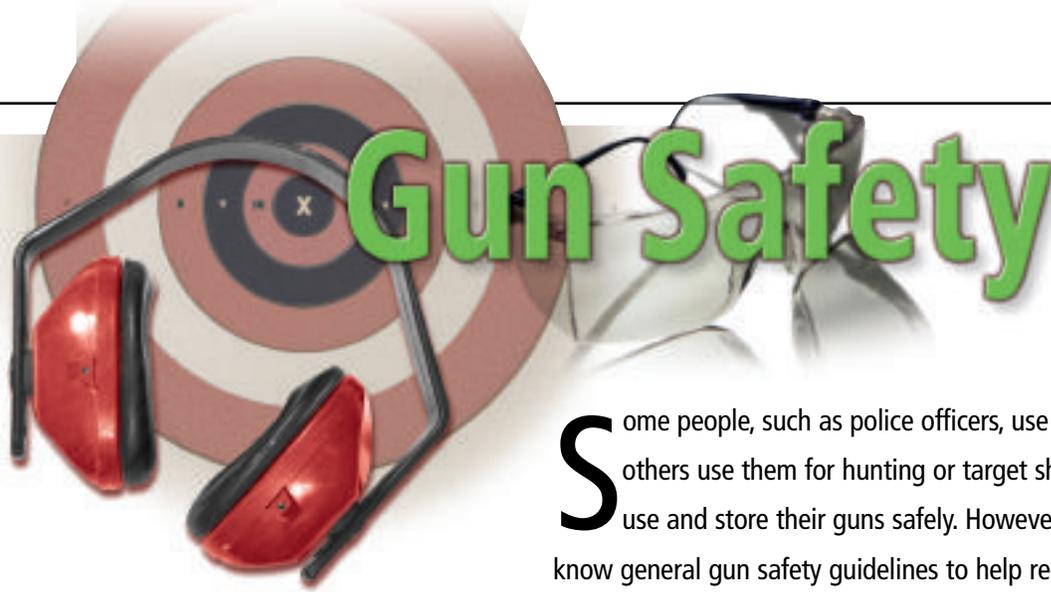
Unintentional

Injuries Of firearm-related unintentional fatalities, over 70 percent involve handguns.

◀ Reporting a firearm at school to the police and to school authorities may prevent a dangerous incident.

Mini-Review

1. What is the influence of laws, policies, and practices on gun possession and use?
2. How does carrying a weapon increase the risk of injury?



Some people, such as police officers, use guns for their occupation, while others use them for hunting or target shooting. Many of these people use and store their guns safely. However, it is important for everyone to know general gun safety guidelines to help reduce the risk of injury.

What to Know About Gun Safety

Make the Connection

Making Responsible Decisions For more information on making responsible decisions, see page 61 in Lesson 6.

At home If you have guns in your home, be sure they are stored unloaded in a secured, locked container, such as a gun safe or a strong-box, with the key in a secure place out of the reach of children. Guns that cannot be locked up should be stored unloaded with a durable trigger lock. Ammunition should be stored in a secure container away from a gun. All guns should be out of the sight and reach of children.

Away from home If you happen to see a gun that is not safely locked up at a neighbor's house, at school, or on the street, there are some guidelines to follow. First, do not touch the gun. The gun may be loaded, and it is a serious risk to you and those around you if not handled properly. A gun you see at school or on the street may have been used in a crime. Second, leave the area at once. If the gun is loaded and someone decides to pick it up or play with it, everyone in the area is in immediate danger. Last, immediately tell a responsible adult, such as a parent, guardian, teacher, or law enforcement officer, where the gun is located.

Additional actions Along with knowing what to do if you see a gun, it is also important to know additional

actions you can take to reduce the risk of being injured by a gun.

Suppose you want to purchase a gun for hunting. Ask your parents or guardian for permission. Learn how to use the gun. Make sure it is stored unloaded in a locked container.

Avoid being in situations that are unsupervised by parents or guardians where there will be access to guns. You cannot be certain what will happen if another person has a gun and does not know how to use it correctly.

Always follow laws because they protect you and others. Do not carry a gun to school or have one in your car. Remember, it is illegal to carry a weapon to school. Do not pretend you are going to use a gun. Pretending can be misinterpreted, and this may lead to violence. If you know that someone at your school is keeping a gun or other weapon there, immediately tell a teacher or your principal. Also inform school authorities if you know that someone is planning to bring a gun or other weapon to school. You will help to keep yourself and others safe by keeping weapons out of your school.

Do not provoke or argue with someone who has a gun. Keep your distance. Remember, guns often are used to inflict injury when someone becomes emotional.

Health TEKS

7E (covered on page 706): Analyze and apply strategies for avoiding violence, gangs, weapons, and drugs.

Quick Quiz:

What should teens do if they see a gun at their school?

weapons
concealed weapons



Key Terms Review

Complete these fill-in-the-blank statements with the lesson Key Terms on the left. Do not write in this book.

1. Devices used for fighting, such as guns, knives, and clubs, are known as _____.
2. Weapons that are partially or completely hidden from view are considered to be _____.

Recalling the Facts

3. What is the penalty for students who take firearms to school?
4. What is the federal minimum age for possession of a long gun?
5. Why does carrying a weapon increase the risk of injury due to accidents?
6. Why does carrying a weapon increase the risk that it will be used in a fight?
7. How does carrying a weapon increase the risk that it will be used in a crime?
8. What are the federal laws regarding the sale and possession of handguns and rifles to teens?
9. What are some recreational uses for guns?
10. Name an occupation in which a firearm might be carried.
11. Explain the different types of laws that states have regarding carrying a concealed weapon.
12. Name several examples of weapons.
13. What are the guidelines for safely storing a gun at home?
14. Why is it important that you not touch a weapon that you find on the street?

Critical Thinking

15. How does the Gun-Free Schools Act help prevent injuries?
16. Why is it dangerous to pretend to have a gun?
17. Why are emotional situations and guns a bad combination?
18. How can deciding not to carry a weapon help prevent accidental and deliberate injuries?
19. Why is it important that guns be kept out of reach of children?
20. Analyze strategies for avoiding weapons.
21. Why is it recommended to store guns unloaded and away from ammunition?

Activities

Responsible Decision Making

27. **Role-Play** You and a friend see a man putting a gun into the trash bin behind a restaurant. Your friend says, "Let's get out of here and pretend we didn't see anything." Role-play your response to the situation. Refer to the Responsible Decision-Making Model on page 61 for help.

Real-Life Applications

22. What should you do if someone offers to give you a handgun?
23. What should you do if you are at a friend's house and he wants to show you his dad's guns but his parents are not home?
24. Why do you think laws were passed to limit gun sales and possession of certain types of guns by teens?
25. How would you react if you saw a weapon at school?
26. Why do you think the Gun-Free Schools Act requires such a strict punishment?

Sharpen Your Life Skills

28. **Advocate for Health** Research the laws in your state regarding the sale of handguns, rifles, and ammunition. Make a poster to illustrate the laws. Ask one of your school's administrators for permission to display the poster in a prominent place in your school.