



## Suicide risk factors lower for blacks

By Daniel Yee  
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ATLANTA - A study of suicides in Fulton County found that blacks who commit suicide aren't as likely as whites to display telltale suicide risk factors such as depression, health officials said Monday.

The Georgia Division of Public Health studied 1,300 suicides in Fulton County between 1988 and 2002 and found blacks were less likely than whites to have known risk factors including depression, chronic disease, relationship or money problems.

They also were less likely than whites to leave a suicide note or have previously talked about suicide, health officials said.

"Risk factors associated with white suicide may not be predictive of suicides among blacks," health officials said, adding that more needs to be done to eliminate cultural stigmas against talking about mental health issues.

Dr. David Satcher, former director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, said he was not convinced the suicides stemmed from non-traditional risk factors.

"Just because a black person commits suicide and doesn't have a history of depression doesn't mean he was not depressed. He might not have had access to health care," Satcher said.

What's needed, he said, is "to reduce the stigma around mental illness and encourage African-Americans to seek treatment. Then we need to try to make sure we improve access to mental health services."

Only 15 percent of the 348 blacks who committed suicide left behind a suicide note, compared with 36 percent of 784 whites. About 63 percent of whites and 42 percent of blacks had a history of depression leading up to the suicides.

Both groups frequently used firearms in suicides. Guns were used 62 percent of the time for black suicides and 59 percent of the time for whites.

Fulton County was selected because a similar number of blacks and whites live there and health officials do not have as much data on suicides of blacks as they do for whites.

Nationwide, about there

See SUICIDE/4B

# Prom and proper: An attire primer

## Formal wear takes on an edge as teens dare to bare



Pasche Fungaling, a sales associate at Fashion.Com in Eastland Mall shows off one of the more popular dress styles for prom season. Fungaling suggests the style of dress should be determined by the girl's body type, with plus sizes going conservative.

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If Gifty Wright, an Independence High School junior, goes to her high school prom, she will be wearing something sexy. Which seems to be a trend with high school girls on what was traditionally an elegant and classy night.

"(My dress) would be backless, with a split," Wright said, adding the dress would either be black, pink or blue. Her shoes would be strappy sandals with high stiletto heels.

But, what happened to looking like a princess at the prom? Wright, 16, said the world has changed, and so have prom styles.

WPEG radio personality Janine Davis, founder of the Girl Talk Foundation, said girls want to wear more risqué dresses to attract the attention that music stars like Beyonce and rapper Trina receive.

"But that is the wrong kind of attention," Davis said. "When I went to prom, it was about being poised and cute, now it about being the flyest and the sexiest."

The Girl Talk Foundation held its Project Prom event earlier this month where girls were able to pick dresses and accessories free of charge. But before dresses were given away, the girls had to take a social etiquette class.

Another thing that has changed is who would go with Wright to pick out her dress. Wright isn't taking her mother to find that sexy get-up.

"It would be me and my cousin," she said.

Retailers have also noticed the change in styles of prom dress. Pasche Fungaling, 22, of Fashion.Com in Eastland Mall, says girls are looking for attention-grabbing dresses. She pointed to a form-fitting red dress with spaghetti straps and a low v-neck.

"This is what girls are looking for," she said. "They want something so their man will look at them and no one else. Red attracts attention and that's what they want."

Fungaling also said the style of dress depends on the girl and her body type. She said some plus sized girls go for the more conservative look or a traditional dress that looks more like a ball gown. But others go for outrageous styles, like a form-fitting dress with one shoulder out.

Fungaling said most girls who shop for dresses don't bring their parents along and are likely go by what their friends say looks good on them, something Fungaling said her mother wouldn't have gone for.

"My mother made my dress," she said. "It was long. I had a shawl. It was

See REVEALING3B

# What's keeping you from being fit and fabulous?

## 7 comebacks to common excuses

SPECIAL TO THE POST

"I'm too tired." "I don't have time." "I can't find a babysitter." Sound familiar?

As we ease into spring, sisters have a few challenges when it comes to health and fitness. Right now, nearly 70 percent of African American women are overweight or obese.

And a recent survey by the American Council on Exercise found that 92 per-

cent of black women do not work out regularly. It's time to make a change and get serious about improving your health. So, when you hear yourself making those same, old, tired excuses, keep these comebacks in mind:

### I'm too tired.

You won't be afterwards. Regular physical activity not only helps you feel great, but will energize you. It may be hard to stick to the routine at

first, but once you begin to exercise regularly, you'll realize the pros far outweigh your initial reasons for not being active.

### I'm too busy.

What's more important than your health? If time is a factor, try doing 10 minutes of physical activity three times a day, or planning activities that get your family moving like a softball game, biking or a walk through the

zoo. Finding time for activity today may also help you avoid diseases tomorrow, like type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke, and some forms of cancer.

### I just don't feel like it.

Call a friend. If you don't like to exercise alone, bring friends together to walk, jog, or bike; take a class together at a nearby community or fitness center. If you still can't

convince a buddy to join you, try taking a class like dance or yoga.

### I don't like the way healthy foods taste.

Spice 'em up. While fried foods and fatty meats may taste good, they put too much saturated fat into your diet if you eat them often or in large amounts. Add a little flavor to healthier foods by using herbs, spices, lemon, lime or vinegar. For baked potatoes,

add salsa, low-fat sour cream or garlic for a different twist and for the old standard-collard greens-cook with onions, garlic, chicken broth or smoked turkey, turkey bacon or turkey ham.

### I work long days and often have to eat after 8 p.m.

Strive for balance. It's how much you eat during the whole day and how much

Please see TIPS/3B

