The dangers of drinking and walking, especially on New Year's
By Paul Taylor
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During the holiday season, we’re often reminded that drinking and driving are a deadly combination. But drinking and walking can also be extremely hazardous, warns a trauma surgeon at the Loyola University Health System in Chicago.

During his 25 years in medicine, Thomas Esposito has treated many people who were struck by vehicles after consuming alcohol. U.S. statistics from 2008 show that 38 per cent of fatally injured pedestrians over 16 years of age had blood-alcohol level at or above 0.08 per cent. “If they had been driving and were stopped by police, they would have been arrested for driving under the influence,” Dr. Esposito said.

New Year’s is apparently more deadly for pedestrians than any other time of year, according to a study published in 2005 in the journal Injury Prevention. The researchers found that, from 1986 to 2002, a total of 410 pedestrians were killed on New Year’s Day in the United States. About 58 per cent of those killed had high blood-alcohol levels.

Aside from being hit in traffic, many revellers “have fallen down the stairs or tripped at home and injured themselves,” Dr. Esposito noted.

So, even if you don’t drink and drive, there’s still good reason not to drink to excess.