

SAFETY AMBASSADOR

Older Adult Falls Prevention



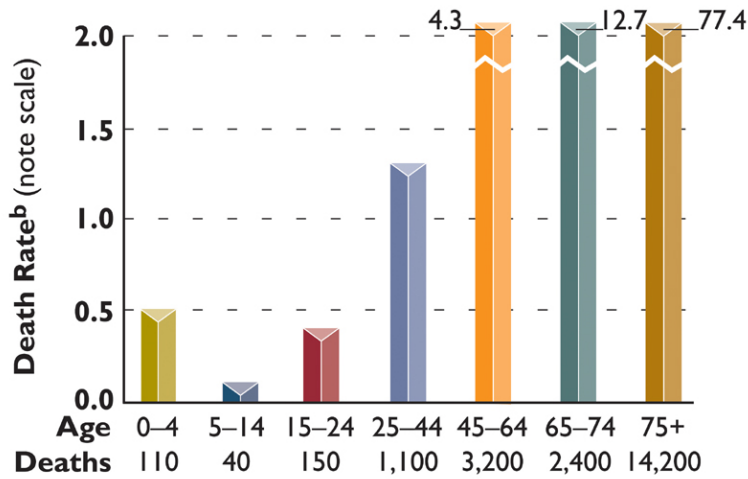
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Falls account for 3 million medically-consulted injuries and 17,000 deaths of older Americans each year, according to the National Safety Council's Injury Facts® 2008. This issue is a growing concern to employers, people 65 and older, and their friends and families.

Current Data

FALLS



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The number of fatalities from falls has increased almost 50% since 2000. Falls are the leading cause of unintentional fatal and nonfatal injuries for people 65+. Each year, approx. 1 in 3 older Americans fall.

Current Data (cont.)

- 40%+ hospitalized from hip fractures don't return home
- 25% who have fallen die from issues related to the fall
- Falls cause hip fractures, head injuries or even death



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More than 40% of the elderly (those 75+) who fall are hospitalized due to hip fractures don't return home and aren't capable of living independently again.

25% who have fallen pass away from issues related to the fall

Falls can result in hip fractures, head injuries or even death. Those who have fallen often have a hard time recovering and their overall health deteriorates.

Current Data (cont.)

- Heart disease, stroke, cancer, diabetes, or vision problems = higher fall rates
- Falls cost U.S. \$19 billion a year
- \$1 million spent on fall research and prevention



FALLS PREVENTION

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Older adults with heart disease, stroke, cancer, diabetes, or vision problems have higher fall rates

Falls cost the American government \$19 billion a year, but only \$1 million a year is spent on falls research and prevention

Understanding the Data

- Falls are a leading cause of injury and death
- The rate of injuries due to falls has increased over the past decade
- Older adults need to be especially careful about falls prevention



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- Falls are a leading cause of injury and death for people 65 and older
- The rate of injuries due to falls has increased during the past decade and will increase further as the U.S. population ages
- Education about falls prevention is desperately needed

Challenges & Issues

- Lack of education and awareness
- Unknown interactions with medication
- Complicating health factors

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The challenges and issues relating to elderly falls prevention include:

- Current lack of education and awareness about this issue
- Unknown interactions with medications
- Health factors

NSC Strategy – Take Action

- Document science and evaluate solutions
- Develop programs
- Seek legislation
- Develop recognized expertise
- Create partnerships
- Develop NSC public policy statements
- Work the issue at every level



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As a key area of concern due to the injuries and deaths pertaining to falls, the National Safety Council is working to aggressively address this issue by:

- Documenting the science behind falls prevention, including the scope, causes, and proven solutions
- Influencing federal- and state-level policy to promote falls prevention as a social priority
 - Objective: to increase funding of CDC (Centers for Disease Control) falls prevention research and public education
 - Connect local interests to the national advocacy program – need local push on your member of Congress
- Developing new programs and products to increase education and awareness and encourage enforcement of best practices

The Council will also develop recognized expertise, build a national profile for those experts, and when necessary, partner with other organizations or businesses.

The National Safety Council will also establish public policy statements and work the issue at every level.

The Council will evaluate results against objectives and make modifications when necessary.

Solutions/Prevention

Know risks and minimize hazards

- Risk Factors include:
 - Osteoporosis
 - Over age 80
 - A history of previous falls
 - Changes in balance and walking patterns
 - Changes in vision and sensation
 - Taking multiple medicines



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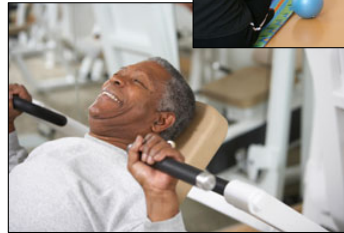
FALLS PREVENTION

People need to understand the risks for falling and how to minimized hazards.

- Risk Factors include:
 - Osteoporosis
 - Over age 80
 - A history of previous falls
 - Changes in balance and walking patterns
 - Changes in vision and sensation
 - Taking multiple medicines

Solutions/Prevention

- Balance, flexibility, and strength training improve mobility and reduce the risk of falling
- Maintain good health
 - Exercise
 - Eat a healthy diet



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- Statistics show that most older adults do not exercise regularly, and 35% of people over the age of 65 do not participate in any leisure physical activity
- Lack of exercise only makes it harder for individuals to recover after a fall
- There are many creative and low-impact forms of physical activity that promotes fall prevention, such as tai chi

Solutions/Prevention

Keeping Your Home Safe

- Evaluate surroundings
- Make changes to the home environment to help a person feel safer and less at risk of falling



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Hazards around the house, such as electrical cords, rugs, items in walk ways or on the stairs, can be eliminated.

By making changes to the home environment, a person can feel safer and less at risk of falling

Activities & Involvement

nsc.org Web site & National Safety Month - June Falls Free Coalition

- Increases funding/awareness for fall prevention
- Part of the National Council on Aging
- healthyagingprograms.org

National Center for Injury Prevention & Control

- Federal agency for falls research and prevention



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There are activities and ways to get involved, to learn more about falls prevention. The National Safety Council Web site has safety tips, guidelines, articles, and fact sheets to help you better understand why falls is an important issue and what needs to be done to address it.

You Can Get Involved

- Every month, survey your home to spot and correct any potential falling hazards
- Discuss with your family the importance of safety regarding falls and what to do if someone is injured from falling



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Regularly take measures to eliminate falls hazards around the home. Good habits include eliminating clutter in hallways and stairs, maintaining a well-lit home, installing grab bars in the shower or tub, removing throw rugs or using non-skid throw rugs.

You Can Get Involved

- Visit nsc.org
- Become a proud member company of the National Safety Council - join.nsc.org
- Donate to Friends of Safety - nsc.org

Disclaimer: Information and recommendations are compiled from sources found in the NSC Library that are believed to be reliable. The NSC makes no guarantee as to, and assumes no responsibility for the correctness, sufficiency, or completeness of such information or recommendations.



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If you would like to further support the efforts of the National Safety Council there are several opportunities:

Learn more by visiting their Web site, become a NSC member company, and donate to Friends of Safety.

Thank you for your time. Are there any questions? If I cannot answer them, I will pass them along to the National Safety Council and they will respond to you directly. If you think of questions after I leave, you can email them to the Council at customerservice@nsc.org.