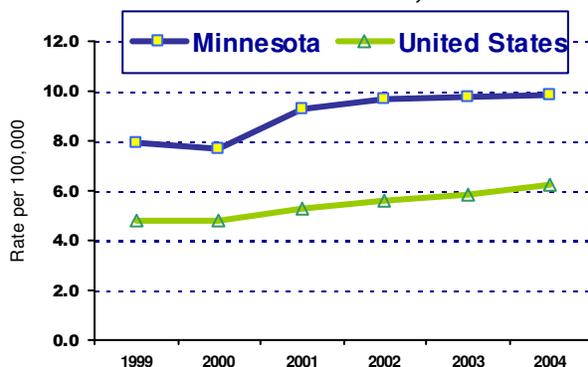


Falls Among Minnesota Adults

Minnesota Data

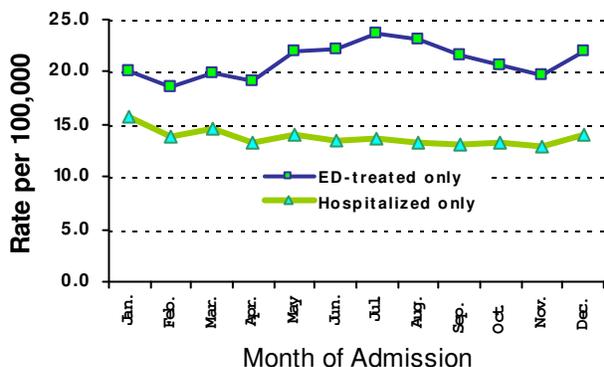
Minnesota had the nation's fourth highest fatal fall rate in 2005 at 10.4/100,000, nearly twice the national rate of 6.4. Minnesota's fall death rate continues to increase.¹

United States and Minnesota, Unintentional fall death rates, 1999-2004¹



- Adults 65 and older accounted for 88% of hospital treated fall fatalities in 2007.²
- In 2007, Minnesota's fatal fall rate exceeded the rate of fatal motor vehicle accidents.³
- Unintentional injury is the fourth leading cause of death for all Minnesotans. Falls account for 30.8% of these unintentional injury deaths.¹
- Falls occur most often inside or near the home⁴, and do not spike in the winter months as might be expected in Minnesota.³

Nonfatal Hospital-Treated Falls by Type and Month of Admission, 65+ Minnesota, 1998-2005³



National Data

The rate of fall-related deaths rose significantly over the past decade, driving health care costs and significantly impacting quality of life.⁴

- More than one third of adults, age 65 and older, fall each year.⁵
- Falls are the leading cause of injury death for adults 65 and older.⁶ In 2005, 15,800 older adults died from fall injuries.⁵
- Falls were the leading cause of emergency treatment for non-fatal injury in all ages, except 15-24 year olds (2007).⁶
- Falls are the leading cause of injury and hospital trauma admissions.⁶ About 1.8 million older adults were treated in emergency departments and more than 433,000 individuals were hospitalized.⁵
- Falls are a leading cause of both hip fractures and traumatic brain injuries.⁴
- Up to 25% of adults who lived independently before a hip fracture require a nursing home stay of at least one year after injury. As many as 20% of these patients with a hip fracture die within one year of the injury.⁴
- The percentage of persons hospitalized as a result of injury increases with age. The rate among those ≥ 65 years was almost three times that of 25-64 year olds in 1997-1999 and 2004-2007.⁷

Cost of Falls

In Minnesota, cost for non-fatal falls among adults 65 and older, was more than \$182 million (2005).³

The total direct U.S. cost of all fall injuries for people 65 and older exceeded \$19 billion: \$0.2 billion for fatal falls, and \$19 billion for nonfatal fall injuries (2000).⁴

By 2020, the annual direct and indirect cost of fall injuries is expected to reach \$54.9 billion (in 2007 dollars).⁴



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Falls Among Minnesota Adults

In a study of people age 72 and older, the average health care cost of a fall injury totaled \$19,440, including hospital, nursing home, emergency room, and home health care, but not physician services.⁸

Factors That Affect Risk of Falling

- Mobility problems due to muscle weakness or balance problems or chronic health conditions such as arthritis or stroke
- Complications of chronic health conditions such as vision changes or loss of sensation in feet
- Nutritional status
- History of falls
- Fear of falling
- Medication side effects and/or interactions
- Alcohol use
- Home and environmental hazards (clutter, poor lighting, etc.)
- Incorrect size, type, or use of assistive devices (walkers, canes, crutches, etc.)
- Poorly designed public spaces⁹

Chronic Disease and Falls

- From 1985 to 2004, the proportion of older adults living with chronic conditions has increased. Chronic conditions place adults at greater risk for falling and they are less likely to survive injuries from a fall.¹⁰
- As the number of chronic conditions or disabilities increase, the potential for experiencing adverse outcomes from falls increases substantially.¹¹

How Falls Can Be Prevented

- Education about falls and how to modify risk factors
- Regular exercise that maintains balance and strength (150 minutes/week).
- Medication review for side effects and interactions
- Vision examination
- Good nutrition to support strong bones and daily activity
- Home safety assessment^{11, 12}

Many conditions considered to be a result of aging are really caused by inactivity. Older people can regain 27% of muscle strength, reversing age-related decline by 15 years by attending one exercise class a week and doing home exercises. Increasing physical activity among older adults is the key strategy to preventing falls.¹³

For more information

- ❖ Minnesota Falls Prevention
<http://www.mnfallsprevention.com/>
- ❖ Brain Injury Association of Minnesota
<http://www.braininjurymn.org/>
- ❖ CDC. Falls – Older Adults
<http://www.cdc.gov/HomeandRecreationalSafety/Falls/index.html>
- ❖ Center for Healthy Aging: Falls Free Coalition
<http://www.healthyagingprograms.org/index.asp>

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