



The Bonner County Safety Record

All the News that is Safe to Print

February 6, 2017
Edition 25

Slip & Fall Winter

What Conditions Make You More Likely to Fall?

Research has identified many conditions that contribute to falling, these are called risk factors.

- Lower body weakness
- Vitamin D deficiency (that is, not enough vitamin D in your system)
- Difficulties with walking and balance
- Use of medicines, such as tranquilizers, sedatives, or antidepressants. Even some over-the-counter medicines can affect balance and how steady you are on your feet.
- Vision problems
- Foot pain or poor footwear
- Home hazards or dangers such as
 - broken or uneven steps,
 - throw rugs or clutter that can be tripped over, and
 - no handrails along stairs or in the bathroom.

Most falls are caused by a combination of risk factors. The more risk factors a person has, the greater their chances of falling.

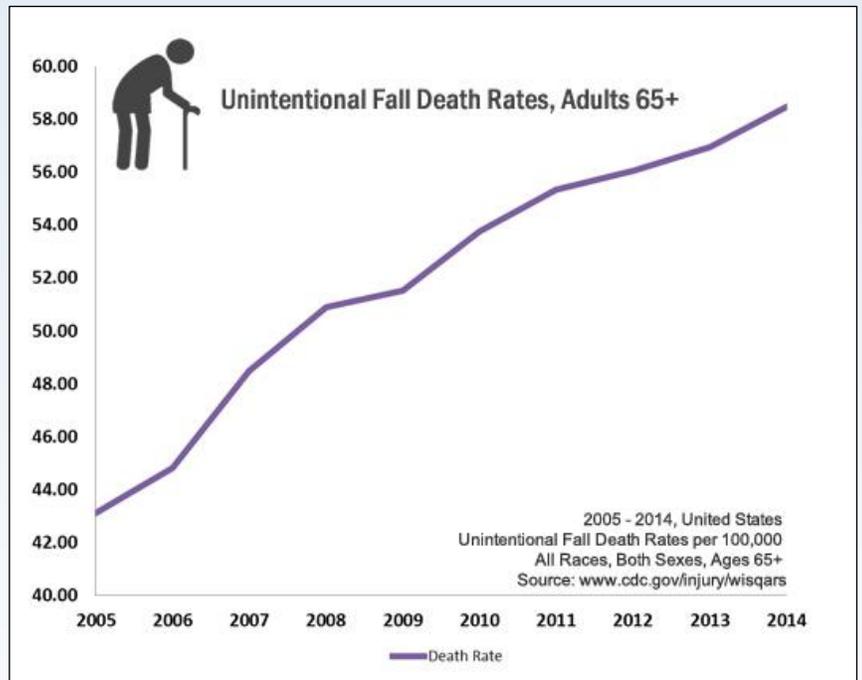
Healthcare providers can help cut down a person's risk by reducing the fall risk factors listed above.

<https://www.cdc.gov/homeandrecreationalafety/falls/adultfalls.html>



Like all safety hazards, slip & fall hazards can be controlled. Review the following statistics and helpful hints in this newsletter for ideas on preventing falls.

- Eliminate slip hazards, such as cleaning up spills and removing ice from walkways.
- Use safety gear, such as winter boots and handrails.
- Follow good safety practices, such as choosing to wear proper gear, being aware of hazards, and choosing to control hazards.



Falls Are Serious and Costly

- One out of five falls causes a serious injury such as broken bones or a head injury.
- Each year, 28 million older people are treated in emergency departments for fall injuries.
- Over 800,000 patients a year are hospitalized because of a fall injury, most often because of a head injury or hip fracture.
- Each year at least 300,000 older people are hospitalized for hip fractures.
- More than 95% of hip fractures are caused by falling, usually by falling sideways.
- Falls are the most common cause of traumatic brain injuries (TBI).
- Adjusted for inflation, the direct medical costs for fall injuries are \$31 billion annually. Hospital costs account for two-thirds of the total.



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THE CHALKBOARD

SLIPS, TRIPS & FALLS: THE PAINFUL TRUTH



Source: Banville Law/New York Slip & Fall Resource Center

BOTH MEN & WOMEN
ARE EQUALLY LIKELY TO HAVE A SLIP-AND-FALL ACCIDENT, ACCORDING TO THE NATIONAL FLOOR SAFETY INSTITUTE, BUT WOMEN ARE MORE LIKELY TO HAVE A FATAL SLIP-AND-FALL INCIDENT.

Illustration: Shaw Nielsen