

Utah Healthy Aging Report

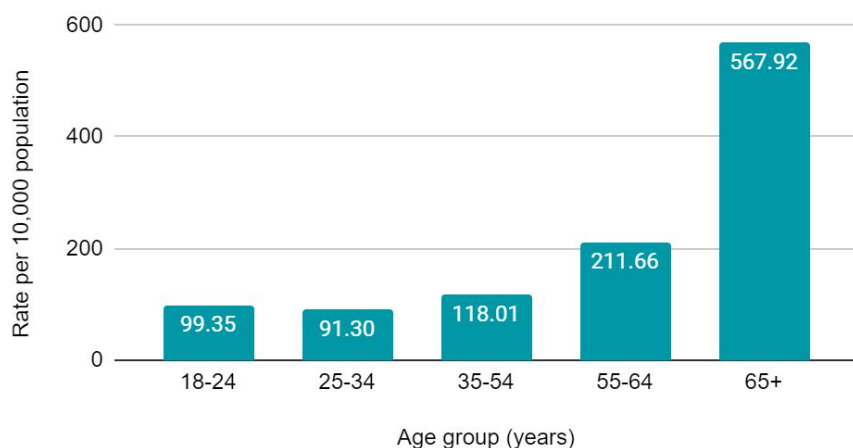
Falls (Unintentional)

This report is for all Utah agencies to understand and improve areas affecting the health of our aging residents – increase awareness of chronic conditions and their impact on individuals and communities, identify groups most affected by the disease, and recommend best practices to healthcare providers and communities.

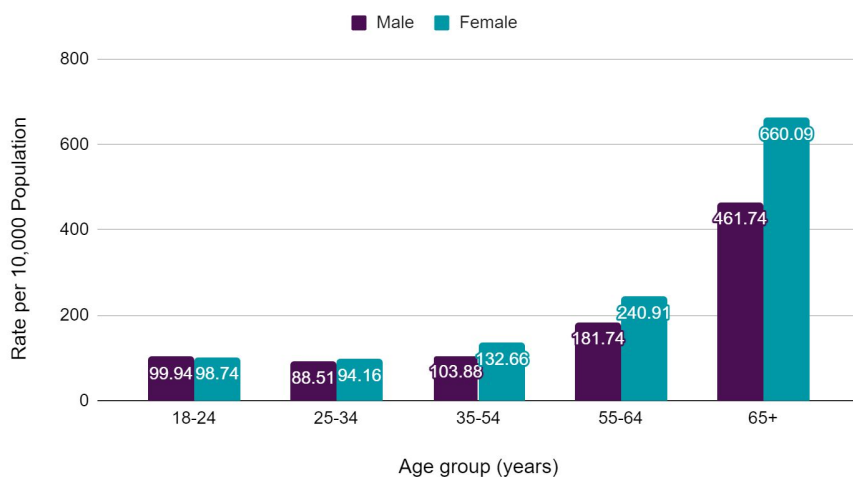
Overview of falls

Each year, millions of unintentional falls occur among older - 65 years or older - adults, resulting in thousands of injuries and deaths. In this population, it is estimated that about one in five falls will result in a serious injury, such as a traumatic brain injury or broken bone. Injuries from falls can result in a reduced ability to remain independent and lower overall quality of life.

Older adults experience more fall-related emergency department visits



Older female adults experience a higher rate of fall-related emergency room visits





Facts About Falls

- Over 95% of hip fractures result from a fall
- Falls are the most common cause of traumatic brain injury
- Falls resulted in almost 400 deaths among older Utahns in 2022
- Falls resulted in over 22,000 visits to the emergency room among older Utahns in 2021
- There are ways to reduce the risk of falls

Note: Rates presented are crude rates. 2021 is the most recent year for which fall-related emergency department visit data is available. 2022 is the most recent year for which fall-related mortality data is available.

Intro: Falls are a leading cause of injury and injury-related death among older adults in Utah.

- **Goal 1:** To reduce the rate of fall-related emergency department visits among adults aged 65 years and older. The U.S. target is currently 5,447 visits per 100,000 population.
- **Goal 2:** To prevent an increase in fall-related deaths among adults aged 65 years and older. The U.S. target is currently 63.4 deaths per 100,000 population.

Strategy: Educate older adults on the risk factors of falls, and provide information on the ways to prevent falls from happening.

Progress toward goals

Utah rates per 100,000 population:

- Fall-related emergency department visits among adults 65 years and older
 - 5,679.17
- Fall-related deaths among adults 65 years and older
 - 96.70
- There is a trend of increase for fall-related death rates
 - Fall-related death rates have regularly increased since 2016
- Utah is currently in excess of U.S. target values for both Goal 1 and Goal 2
 - Goals are derived from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Healthy People 2030

Risk factors for falls

There are several factors that put someone at greater risk for a fall. These include:

- Older age
- Poor eyesight
- Lack of regular exercise
- Poor nutrition
- Substance abuse and smoking
- Misuse of medications
- Having certain health conditions, including:
 - Osteoporosis
 - Arthritis
 - Clinical depression
 - Dementia
 - Neurological or musculoskeletal disorders
- In-home environmental hazards, including:
 - Poor lighting
 - Lack of grab bars and handrails
 - Slippery or wet surfaces
 - Uneven floors and surfaces
 - Clutter
 - Loose throw rugs

Ways to prevent falls

The Utah Department of Health and Human Services recommends six different steps to reduce the risk of falling:

- Begin a regular exercise program. Exercise improves strength and balance, as well as coordination which is vital to helping you stay on your feet. Local senior centers and health departments across the state offer free or low-cost exercise and falls prevention classes. To find a class, visit livingwell.utah.gov.
- Talk to your healthcare provider. Ask your healthcare provider if you are at risk of falling. It's also important to tell your healthcare provider if you have fallen before.
- Review medications with your healthcare provider or pharmacist. Some medicines or combinations of medicines may make you sleepy or dizzy increasing your risk of falling.
- Check your vision and hearing annually. Ask your doctor to check your eyesight and hearing. Poor vision and hearing can increase your chance of falling.
- Make your home safer. Remove tripping hazards like throw rugs and clutter in walkways as well as books and papers from stairs. Install grab bars next to your toilet and shower. Make sure you have adequate lighting in hallways and bedrooms.
- Talk to your family members and ask for their help. A fall affects more than yourself; family members can help you stay safe if they know what to watch for and how to help.