

Senior Services Division

Injury Prevention in Older Adults



This report is intended to identify and understand public health issues affecting older adults age 60+ living in Davis County. The goal of this report is to increase awareness of these conditions and their impact on individuals and communities, identify groups most affected by these issues, and establish strategies for improvement.

Overview of Injury Prevention

Unintentional injuries, particularly those caused by falls, are common and increase with age. Falls are the leading cause of injury among older adults. However, not all falls result in injury, with only 37% of those who fall report an injury that requires medical treatment or restricts movement for at least one day. In 2023, an estimated 15,000 Davis County adults aged 60+ fell, most of whom likely did not seek medical attention.

Injuries caused by falls are the most common reason for Emergency Room (ER) visits among older adults. Falls are also the most common cause of traumatic brain injuries

Fall-Related ER Visits, Hospitalizations, and Deaths Among Davis County Adults per 10,000 Population (2018 - 2022)			
Age Group	ER Visits	Hospital	Deaths
55-64	184	18	1
65-74	322	44	2
75-84	711	125	11
85+	1435	337	40

(TBIs) and hip fractures or other broken bones in older adults. Over 20% of Utah older adults who fell in 2020 also had a traumatic brain injury or broken bones.

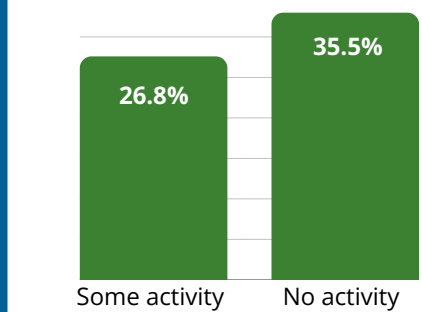
Unintentional injuries were the 7th leading cause of death among Davis County residents age 65+ in 2022. Falls accounted for more than 2 in 3 (70.0%) of those injury-related deaths.

Data: [CDC WONDER](#), 2018-2022 (crude); [IBIS ED](#), 2018-2022 (crude); [IBIS Inpatient](#), 2018-2022 (crude); [Johns Hopkins](#), 2024; [Stanford](#), 2024; [Utah Health Status Update](#), 2023; [U.S. Census](#), 2023

Injuries caused by falling can be costly, with Davis County adults aged 60+ paying over \$6,000 more than those aged less than 60. The median cost of an ER visit, after medical insurance, for Davis County older adults is \$8,607. The median cost of a hospitalization, after medical insurance, is \$44,707. In total, Davis County older adults paid \$57.4 million for fall-related ER visits and \$24.3 million for fall-related hospitalizations in 2022.

Data: [IBIS ED](#), 2018-2022; [IBIS Inpatient](#), 2018-2022

Physical Activity Among Davis County Older Adults Who Have Fallen in the Past Year (2016 - 2023)



Data: [IBIS BRFSS](#), 2016-2023 (crude); [NCOA](#), 2024; [NIA](#), 2022

Research has shown that maintaining muscle mass as we age is an important factor in fall prevention. Davis County adults age 60+ who report not engaging in physical activity have a significantly higher percentage of falls compared to those who engage in some physical activity.

Older adults who report having diagnosed arthritis also report significantly higher percentages of falls compared to those that do not have arthritis. Arthritis can make physical activity difficult or painful, but low-impact, gentle activities can reduce arthritis symptoms and lower the chances of falling.



Key Findings



From 2020-2023, over 1 in 4 (28.8%) Davis County adults aged 60+ reported falling in the past year ³

1.8x

Women were hospitalized due to falls at 1.8x the rate of men in 2022 ⁵

79.2%

79.2% of falls occur at home, most commonly in bedrooms, bathrooms, and on stairs ¹⁰



2 in 5 (40.2%) older adults with arthritis reported falling in 2023. ³

2x

Falling once doubles the chance of an older adult falling again ¹

Current Progress and Strategies for Improvement

Risk Factors and Prevention

Most falls are caused by a combination of risk factors. The more risk factors a person has, the greater their chances of falling. However, there are several ways to reduce negative health outcomes following falls or prevent falls from occurring.

Risk Factors

- A previous fall;
- Lower body weakness;
- Difficulties with walking and balance;
- Vision problems;
- Foot pain or poor footwear;
- Use of medications that affect balance;
- Mild cognitive impairment or dementia;
- Vitamin D deficiency; and
- Tripping hazards in the home.

Prevention

- Stay physically active;
- Have your eyes and hearing tested;
- Talk to your doctor about medications that make you dizzy or confused;
- Fall-proof your home by removing clutter and throw rugs, improving lighting, and using nonslip mats in the shower or bath; and
- Use an assistive device if you feel unsteady when standing or walking.

Data: [CDC Facts About Falls](#), 2024; [Mayo Clinic](#), 2024; [NIA](#), 2022

Healthy Aging Evidence-Based Classes

One of the leading recommendations to prevent falls is exercise that focuses on strength training and balance. Age-related loss of bone and muscle mass are noteworthy contributors to falls among older adults. Activities such as walking, yoga, water workouts, and Tai Chi help improve strength, balance, coordination, and flexibility. Regular physical activity improves muscle strength and keeps joints flexible, and strength training may help slow bone loss from osteoporosis.

The Davis County Senior Services Division has implemented several evidence-based exercise programs to help older adults improve balance and build muscle. These programs have been incorporated into the weekly schedule at all three Senior Activity Centers, providing ample opportunities for older adults to participate.

Arthritis Foundation Exercise Program - This low-impact class can be done either sitting or standing. These gentle, joint-safe exercises relieve stiffness and decrease arthritis pain.

Bingocize - Strategically combines the game of bingo, exercise, and/or health education.

EnhanceFitness - Group exercise for falls prevention program that helps older adults at all levels of fitness become more active, energized, and empowered.

Tai Chi for Arthritis and Fall Prevention - A fall prevention program that has been shown to improve balance, increase movement, strength, and improve mobility.

Walk with Ease - A program designed to help individuals of all levels start and maintain a safe walking routine.

Number of Davis County Participants by Program in 2023	
Arthritis Foundation Exercise Program	10
Bingocize	103
EnhanceFitness	120
Tai Chi for Arthritis and Fall Prevention	126
Walk with Ease	3

Data: [DCHD Senior Activity Centers](#), 2023; [Mayo Clinic](#), 2024; [NIA](#), 2022; [Senior Services Annual Report](#), 2023; [Stanford](#), 2024

Additional Resources

Arthritis Foundation Exercise Videos	Youtube.com/playlist?list=PLyzVRP3R7jNv77K5arqm6gMwqIQ2JU5xe	N/A
Davis County Senior Services	Daviscountyutah.gov/seniors	801-525-5050
Healthy Aging Program	Healthyaging.utah.gov/	888-222-2542
Mayo Clinic Balance Exercises	Mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/fitness/in-depth/balance-exercises/art-20546836	N/A
Preventing Falls at Home	Nia.nih.gov/health/falls-and-falls-prevention/preventing-falls-home-room-room	N/A
Exercise and Physical Activity	Nia.nih.gov/health/exercise-and-physical-activity	N/A

1. CDC Facts About Falls. 2024. Accessed November 1, 2024. ([View](#))
2. CDC WONDER. 1999-2023. Accessed September 16, 2024. ([View](#))
3. IBIS BRFSS. 2016-2023. Accessed November 21, 2024. ([View](#))
4. IBIS ED Encounter. 2018-2022. Accessed November 21, 2024. ([View](#))
5. IBIS Inpatient. 2018-2022. Accessed November 21, 2024. ([View](#))
6. Johns Hopkins Medicine. 2024. Accessed November 6, 2024. ([View](#))
7. Mayo Clinic Fall Prevention. 2024. Accessed November 7, 2024. ([View](#))

8. National Council on Aging. 2024. Accessed November 21, 2024. ([View](#))
9. National Institute on Aging. 2022. Accessed November 21, 2024. ([View](#))
10. National Library of Medicine. 2015. Accessed November 1, 2024. ([View](#))
11. Stanford Medicine. 2024. Accessed November 6, 2024. ([View](#))
12. Utah Health Status Update. 2023. Accessed November 20, 2024. ([View](#))
13. U.S. Census. 2023. Accessed November 21, 2024. ([View](#))