

### Test Your Knowledge

**Q: How many people fall each year?**

**A:** Millions of people, especially over the age of 65, fall each year. The exact number is not known because less than half of people who fall tell their physician. However, it is estimated that 1 out of every 3 people over the age of 65 will fall each year.<sup>1</sup>

**Q: What are the most common fall-related injuries?**

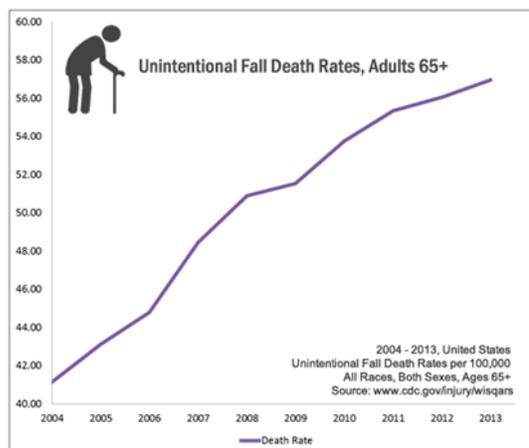
**A:** Some of the most common injuries due to falls include traumatic brain injury (TBI), such as concussions, and fractures of the hip, pelvis, vertebrae, legs and arms.<sup>2</sup>

**Falls** are an everyday occurrence worldwide across all age groups. Though many falls only result in minor injuries, a large number result in devastating outcomes causing disability or death.

Thankfully, falls are preventable if precautions are taken. Think First about your lifestyle and take steps to prevent falling. Talk with your doctor, take a class and learn all you can on preventing falls.

### KNOW THE FACTS

- Falls are the leading cause of fatal and non-fatal injuries in older Americans (65+).<sup>3</sup>
- Falls are the second leading cause of unintentional injury deaths worldwide.<sup>4</sup>
- 1 out of every 5 falls result in a serious injury, such as a head injury or broken bone.<sup>1</sup>
- 2.5 million people are treated for fall injuries each year in emergency departments.<sup>1</sup>
- Falls are the most common cause of TBI.<sup>1</sup>



Fall death rates per 100,000 people.<sup>1</sup>

### Prevent a Fall



### WHAT ARE THE RISK FACTORS FOR FALLS?<sup>5</sup>

- Old age (65+)
- Arthritis
- Diabetes
- Chronic pain
- Parkinson's Disorder
- Muscle weakness
- Anemia or other blood disorders
- Dizziness or difficulty balancing
- Foot disorders
- Substance abuse
- Dementia, Alzheimer's, depression and other brain/mood disorders
- Dehydration
- Low vitamin D
- Fear of falling
- Medication side effects

# Think**First** about...

## Falls *Fast Facts!*

... preventing falls! Falls should not be considered a normal part of aging. Take steps to lower your risk for falls by taking a falls prevention class and implementing preventive measures. Children are also at risk . . .

### Test Your Knowledge

#### Q: Where do falls most often occur?

**A:** More than half of all falls occur at home, although falls can occur anywhere at any given time.<sup>6</sup> Conduct a home safety check!

## Think**First**

National Injury Prevention Foundation

[www.thinkfirst.org](http://www.thinkfirst.org)

The ThinkFirst Foundation is a 501c3 nonprofit organization dedicated to preventing brain, spinal cord and other traumatic injuries through education, research and advocacy. Visit our website to learn more; use our chapter directory to locate a chapter near you — your resource for injury prevention presentations, including ThinkFirst to Prevent Falls!

### FALLS IN CHILDREN

- Falls are the leading cause non-fatal injuries for children and youth ages 0-19.<sup>7</sup>
- Approximately 8,000 children per day are treated in emergency rooms across the U.S. for fall-related injuries.<sup>7</sup>
- Common causes of falls resulting in hospitalization are slipping or tripping, and falling from stairs, bed, or playground equipment.<sup>2</sup>
- There are numerous precautions parents and guardians can take to prevent childhood falls.

### If You Are at Risk, Be Prepared!

Keep your cell phone on you or wear a device for contacting emergency services.

### FALL PREVENTION TIPS

#### Adults<sup>1,2</sup>

- Talk with your doctor to evaluate your fall risk and have your medications and eyes checked regularly
- Understand which medications make you dizzy, sleepy or could affect clotting time if a fall caused bleeding
- Perform strength and balance exercises, eat a healthy diet with adequate fluids
- Improve home safety by removing clutter and loose rugs, installing handrails and ample lighting, using non-slip bath mats and grab bars in the shower, wearing non-slip shoes

#### Children<sup>2,7</sup>

- Make sure surfaces under playgrounds are soft and well maintained
- Supervise children at all times around potential fall hazards including bathrooms, bedrooms, stairs, playground equipment, shopping carts, high chairs and furniture they can climb onto
- Use helmets and protective sports gear
- Install guardrails, stair gates, and window guards to improve home safety

### Sources

<sup>1</sup>Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): Home and Recreational Safety, Older Adult Falls, Important Facts about Falls [Online]. Jan. 20, 2016. Available from URL: <http://www.cdc.gov/homeandrecreational/safety/falls/adultfalls.html> Cited June 15, 2016.

<sup>2</sup>New York State Department of Health: Fall Injuries [Online]. Dec. 2015. Available from URL: [https://www.health.ny.gov/prevention/injury\\_prevention/fall\\_injury.htm](https://www.health.ny.gov/prevention/injury_prevention/fall_injury.htm) Cited June 15, 2016.

<sup>3</sup>National Council on Aging (NCOA): Falls Prevention Facts [Online]. Jan. 2016. Available from URL: <https://www.ncoa.org/resources/falls-prevention-fact-sheet/> Cited June 18, 2016.

<sup>4</sup>World Health Organization (WHO): Media Centre, Falls [Online]. Oct. 2012. Available from URL: <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs344/en/> Cited June 18, 2016

<sup>5</sup>Health in Aging Foundation: Aging & Health A to Z, Falls Prevention, Causes & Symptoms [Online]. Mar. 2012. Available from URL: <http://www.healthinaging.org/aging-and-health-a-to-z/topic/falls/info/causes-and-symptoms/> Cited June 15, 2016.

<sup>6</sup>National Institutes of Health Senior Health (NIH) Senior Health: Falls and Older Adults, Frequently Asked Questions [Online]. Available from URL: <http://nihseniorhealth.gov/falls/faq/faq21.html> Cited June 27, 2016.

<sup>7</sup>Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): Child Safety and Injury Prevention, Fall Prevention [Online]. Apr. 28, 2016. Available from URL: <http://www.cdc.gov/safechild/falls/> Cited June 27, 2016.

<sup>8</sup>BrainLine Kids: Preventing Childhood Falls [Online]. 2015. Available from URL: <http://www.brainline.org/content/2009/03/preventing-childhood-falls.html> Cited June 27, 2016.