**Most Common Hours for Unintended Falls**

**4 Ways to Reduce Fall Risk in the Most Vulnerable Hours**

​Data shows that fall risk peaks between 6-9 pm and again from 3-6 am, when senior care staffing is reduced. What’s more, 50 percent of [people]residents who fall overnight will have another overnight fall. These statistics become even more critical as they are applied to those living with Alzheimer’s and other forms of dementia—as the sun goes down, these residents are at even greater risk for falls as they experience sundowning, increased restlessness, anxiety, and disorientation—all of which can become more intense as the diseases progress.

*Source:* Provider Magazine - [4 Ways to Reduce Fall Risk in the Most Vulnerable Hours (providermagazine.com](https://www.providermagazine.com/Articles/Pages/4-Ways-To-Reduce-Fall-Risk-in-the-Most-Vulnerable-Hours.aspx)

**Falls in the elderly: statistics**

But falls in the elderly are so common (and so potentially dangerous), the United States Centers for Disease Control joins forces with the National Council on Aging to designate a day each year as *\*Falls Prevention Awareness Day*. And that designation is a direct result of the facts about elderly falls, which are sobering.

*\*Fall Prevention Awareness Day*

*Falls Prevention Awareness Week is a national health campaign observed on the first day of fall to increase awareness around falls health and injury prevention. Get ideas to raise awareness in your community.*

*Fall Prevention Awareness Day: September 23, 202*

*Source: National Council on Aging -* [*https://www.ncoa.org/professionals/health/center-for-healthy-aging/national-falls-prevention-resource-center/falls-prevention-awareness-week*](https://www.ncoa.org/professionals/health/center-for-healthy-aging/national-falls-prevention-resource-center/falls-prevention-awareness-week)

*Can an elderly person die from a fall?*

Until a fall affects an older adult close to them, many younger people are unaware of the special risks and threats that falls pose to the lives, health, and independence of seniors. For those who are unaware, the bottom line is shocking: Falls are the leading cause of fatal injuries for older Americans.

Unlike the bodies of children or younger adults, the aging body does not “bounce back” from falls quickly, completely, or easily. A stumble over broken pavement that may trip a youngster for a second or two could result in a broken bone, major spinal damage, or even head trauma for a person twice that age.

The increased risk to older adults from falls is the result of a constellation of factors. Fragile skin, bones, and tissues tear, break, bruise, and crush more easily. Slower reflexes make it more difficult to catch oneself and recover during or after a misstep. Compromised balance; diminished strength and agility; medications and conditions that cause loss of consciousness—all of these factors can contribute to greater vulnerability when falls occur in older people.

Among older adults who died from falls in 2010, according to the United States Centers for Disease Control (CDC), brain trauma was the cause of death in 41% of cases. But even “less severe” initial injuries such as broken bones may also constitute threats to life when they require potentially complicated medical interventions such as invasive surgery, the potential for infection, and the risks of anesthesia.

*Where do most falls occur in the elderly?*

While the CDC gathers extensive data on injuries (morbidity) and deaths (mortality) from falls in older people, it does not track additional information that can fill in the details of how and where most falls occur. Other sources of data complete this picture.

*Common locations for elderly falls*

A Cornell physician responsible for training other medical professionals sets the stage for her educational presentations by laying out the most common locations for falls:

1. 60 percent of falls happen inside the home
2. 30 percent of falls occur outside the home, within a community setting (for example, while shopping or walking on the street)
3. 10 percent in a health care center such as a hospital, clinic, or nursing/rehabilitation facility

**Common locations for elderly falls**

*Common rooms for elderly falls*

Within the home, the National Health Interview Survey of 1997 &1998, offered a wealth of baseline insights. In homes with no stairs, the following rooms and living saw the most falls:

* Living rooms (31 percent of falls)
* Bedrooms (30 percent)
* Kitchens (19 percent)
* Bathrooms (13 percent)
* Hallways (10 percent)

*Common types of elderly falls*

Among falls that produced injuries, the same survey also identified the kinds of falls that were involved (totals are greater than 100 percent because people surveyed could choose more than one option to describe their fall).

* Ground level or first-floor falls (not from a height): 43 percent
* Falls on or from stairs or steps: 14 percent
* Curb or sidewalk falls: 11 percent
* Falls from a chair, bed, or furniture: 9 percent
* Falls involving the bath, shower, or a toilet: 4 percent

This survey also included a category “Other” (including unspecified types) that captured another 26% of self-reports

Source: Lively (<https://www.lively.com/health-and-aging/elderly-falls-statistics/>)

NOTE: How many people fall in parking lots each year? I’ve had a number of people come to me in the last few months telling me about how they experienced an unintended fall in a parking lot. Several had tripped over the parking stop, or bump. Stay focused, don’t let the openness fool you and lull you into a false sense of security when you are in these wide-open spaces.