



Wisconsin Institute  
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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 6, 2026

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## A Look at Older Adult Falls in Wisconsin

(Madison, WI) Falls may be common, but they don't have to be a normal part of aging. Since 2021, the Falls Free Wisconsin Coalition, led by the Wisconsin Institute for Healthy Aging (WIHA), has worked to provide resources to increase resiliency and help us maintain independence, mobility, and confidence as we age. The Coalition raises awareness, promotes best practices, advances policy and systems change, and analyzes fall-related data across the state.

**Newly released reports** from the Coalition highlight the scope and impact of falls in Wisconsin, including emergency department visits, hospitalizations, deaths, alcohol-related falls, and the growing financial cost over time. The data makes it clear: falls are frequent, costly, and have significant consequences for individuals, families, and communities. These findings reinforce the importance of proven prevention strategies, such as the *Stepping On* program, which has been shown to reduce falls by 31%, along with other evidence-based and evidence-informed interventions.

In 2024 alone, more than 55,000 Wisconsin adults aged 65 and older visited an emergency department due to a fall, nearly 13,000 were hospitalized, and, tragically, more than 1,800 died as a result. Falls among older adults caused more than **three times** as many deaths as motor vehicle crashes across all age groups that same year. The data also shows a rise in alcohol-related falls, including increases in emergency department visits, hospitalizations, and deaths.

The full reports are available at [fallsfreewi.org/data](https://fallsfreewi.org/data), including detailed information by county and on alcohol-related falls (view the Data by County and Alcohol & Falls tabs).

As we age, there are important steps we can take to understand our risk of falls and how to prevent them. Talking with your healthcare provider about your personal risk, staying active with regular balance and strength exercise, making home safety improvements such as installing grab bars and reducing clutter, reviewing your medications with a healthcare provider or pharmacist, limiting or reducing alcohol use, wearing supportive footwear, and using mobility aids when needed can all help reduce our risk of falls and build resilience and confidence. Community-based organizations, healthcare systems, and Emergency Medical Service providers also play a critical role by offering prevention programs, strengthening referral networks, and sharing education and resources.

"We have an opportunity to make a real difference in community health by providing access to effective falls prevention programs and initiatives," says Jill Renken, WIHA's Executive Director. "Falls are common and can have a big impact on someone's life, but they don't have to be a normal part of getting older. We know what causes most falls, and we know how to prevent them. There are easy things we can all do to build resiliency and lower the risk of falling." Renken continued by sharing that "WIHA is a nonprofit organization that leads efforts across the state to prevent falls. Through the Falls Free Wisconsin initiative, we provide older adults, families, and caregivers with tools and information to understand fall risks and take steps to stay independent and safe at home and in the community."

We're all aging, and chances are you or someone you know has experienced a fall. If you have, you're not alone. While falls can happen at any age, taking steps to reduce our risk as we grow older can



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make a meaningful difference. By turning awareness into action, we can protect our independence, mobility, and quality of life as we age.

Learn more at **FallsFreeWI.org**.

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