



SOUTH DAKOTA
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH



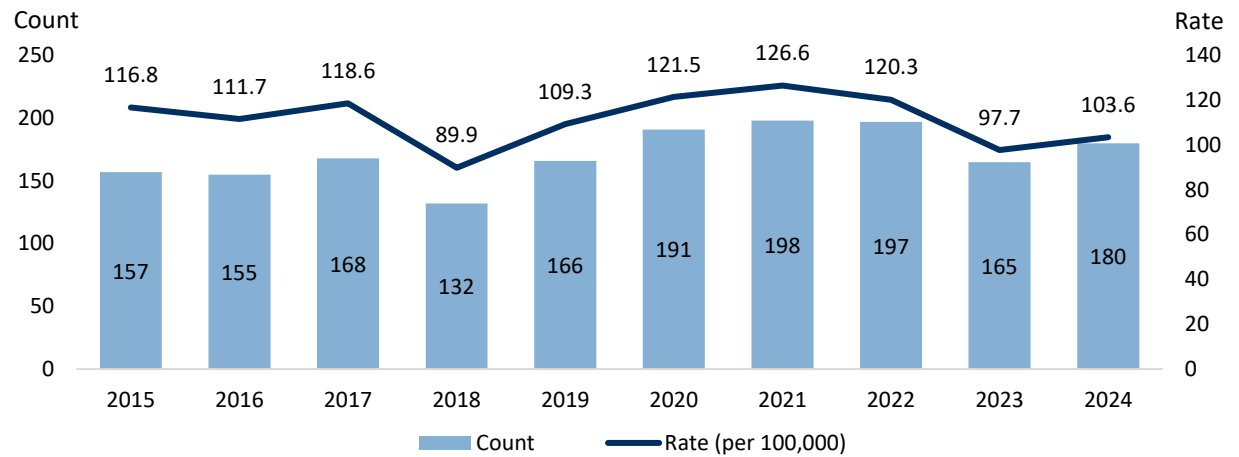
Unintentional Falls Among Adults Aged 65 Years and Older

SOUTH DAKOTA

Unintentional Fall-Related Deaths

Unintentional falls are among the top 10 leading causes of death for South Dakotans aged 65 years and older (2024). From 2015 to 2024, there were 1,709 unintentional fall-related deaths among South Dakotans aged 65 years and older. The number of fall-related deaths increased by 9%, from 165 deaths in 2023 to 180 deaths in 2024 (Figure 1). In 2023, South Dakota had the 13th highest age-adjusted rate (110.2 per 100,000) for unintentional fall-related deaths among individuals aged 65 years and older. The national rate was 78.8 per 100,000.

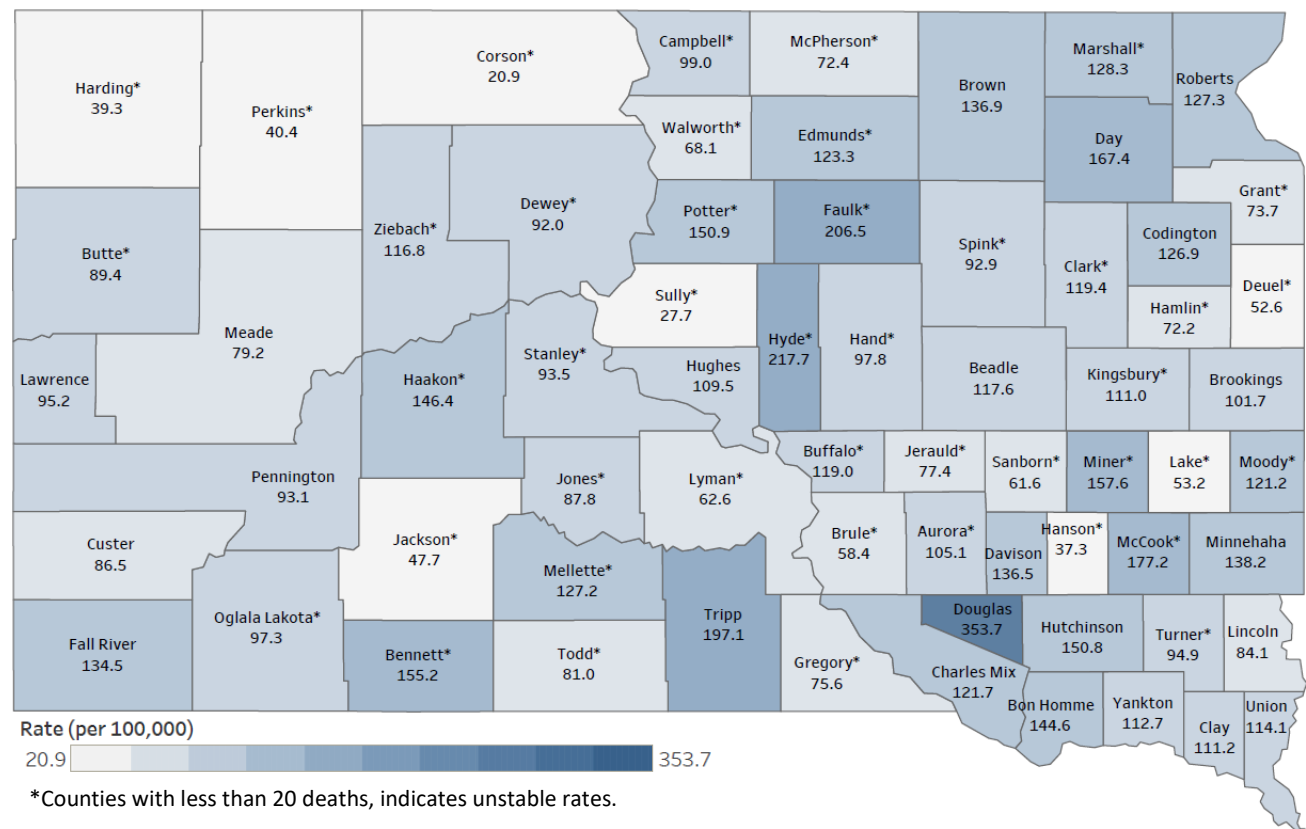
Figure 1: Fall-Related Deaths and Rates, South Dakota



Fall-Related Deaths by County

The figure below shows unintentional fall-related death rates by county for adults aged 65 years and older. Among counties with stable rates for comparison (≥ 20 deaths), the top five counties include Douglas (353.7 per 100,000), Tripp (197.1 per 100,000), Day (167.4 per 100,000), Hutchinson (150.8 per 100,000), and Bon Homme (144.6 per 100,000).

Figure 2: Fall-Related Death Rates by County (2015-2024)



Demographics

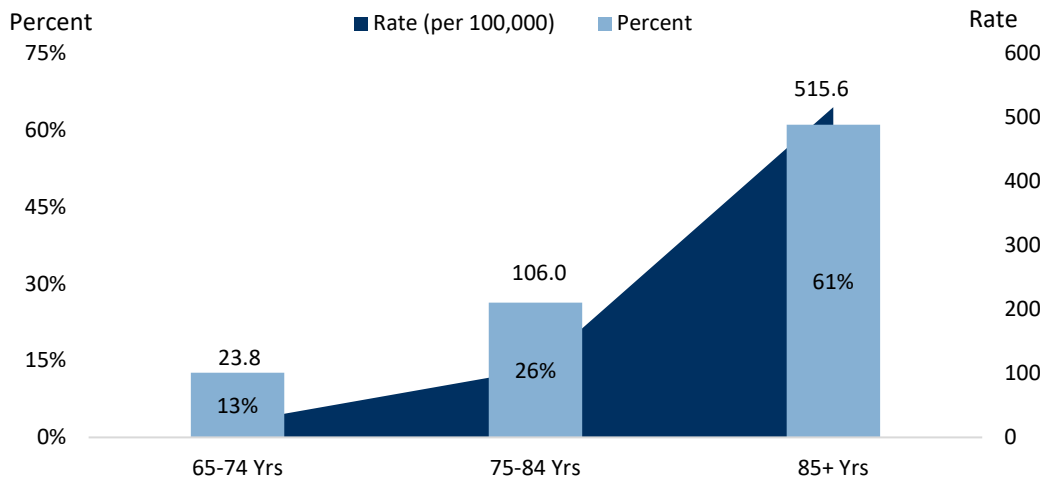
Sex

Overall, females aged 65 years and older are more likely to die from a fall-related cause of death than males. Females made up 57% of fall-related deaths and had a rate of 118.7 per 100,000. Males made up 43% of deaths and had a rate of 103.2 per 100,000 (2015-2024).

Age

Adults over the age of 65 years are at an increased risk of death due to falls and that risks continues to increase as age increases. Individuals aged 85 years and older make up the largest proportion of deaths and have the highest rate among older adults.

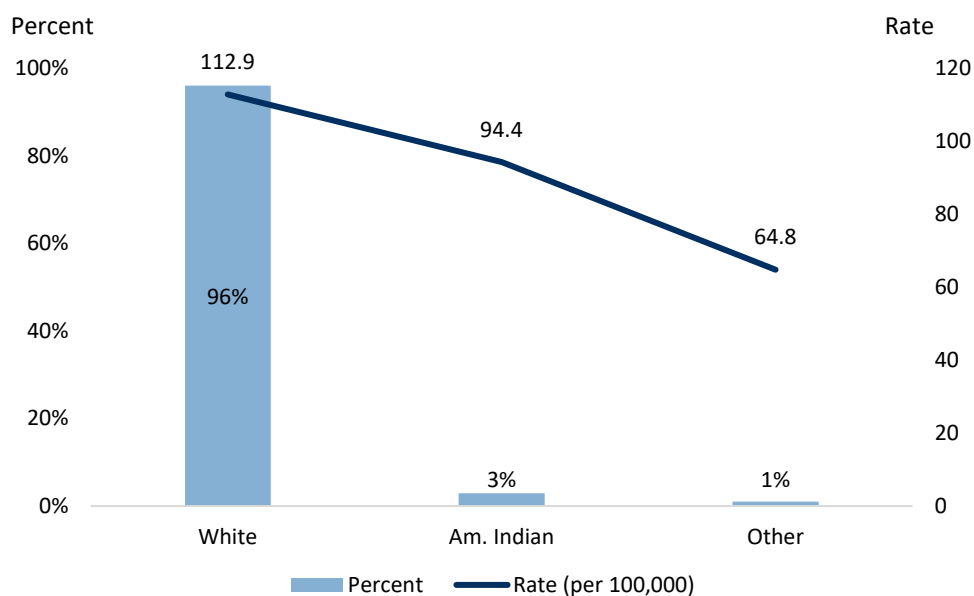
Figure 3: Fall-Related Deaths and Rates by Age Group (2015-2024)



Race

From 2015-2024, 96% of fall-related deaths were White and 3% were American Indian. White residents aged 65 years and older experienced a fall-related death rate 1.2 times higher compared to the American Indian resident rate (112.9 vs 94.4 per 100,000).

Figure 4: Fall-Related Death Rates (per 100,000) by Race (2015-2024)

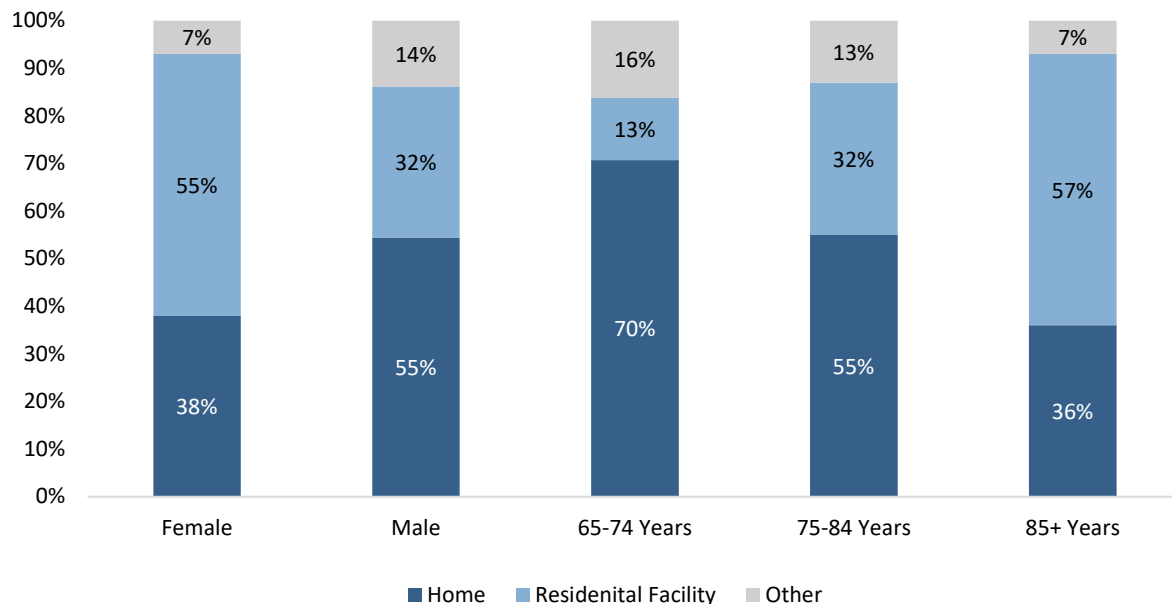


(Other race includes Asian, Black, Pacific Islander, multiracial, and unknown races)

Place of Injury and Types of Falls

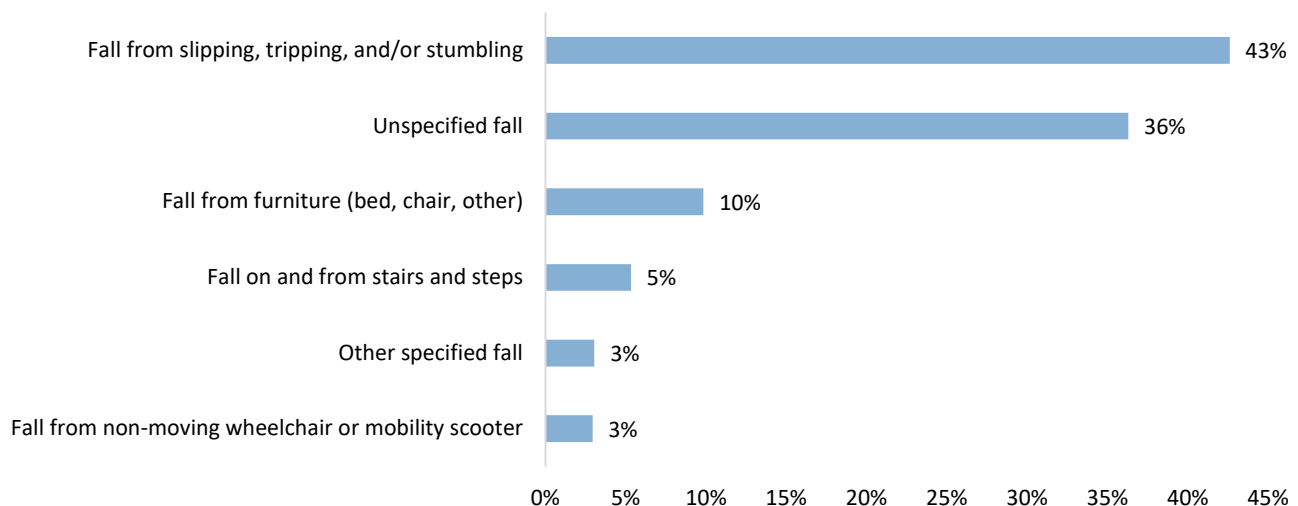
The two most common places of injury for fall-related deaths were the decedent's home (45%) and residential facilities (45%). Differences in place of injury can be seen across the different demographics. Among females, most falls occurred in a residential facility (55%), whereas for males most falls occurred in the home (55%). By age, for decedent's aged 65-84 years most falls occurred in the decedent's home. For adults aged 85 years and older, most falls occurred in a residential facility.

Figure 5: Fall-Related Deaths by Demographic and Place of Injury (2015-2024)



There are different types of falls that can lead to injury and death. The most common type of fall was a fall from slipping, tripping, and/or stumbling, accounting for 43% of deaths (Figure 6). The second most common type of fall was an unspecified fall (36%), which can include unwitnessed falls that may not have enough information to categorize into another type of fall.

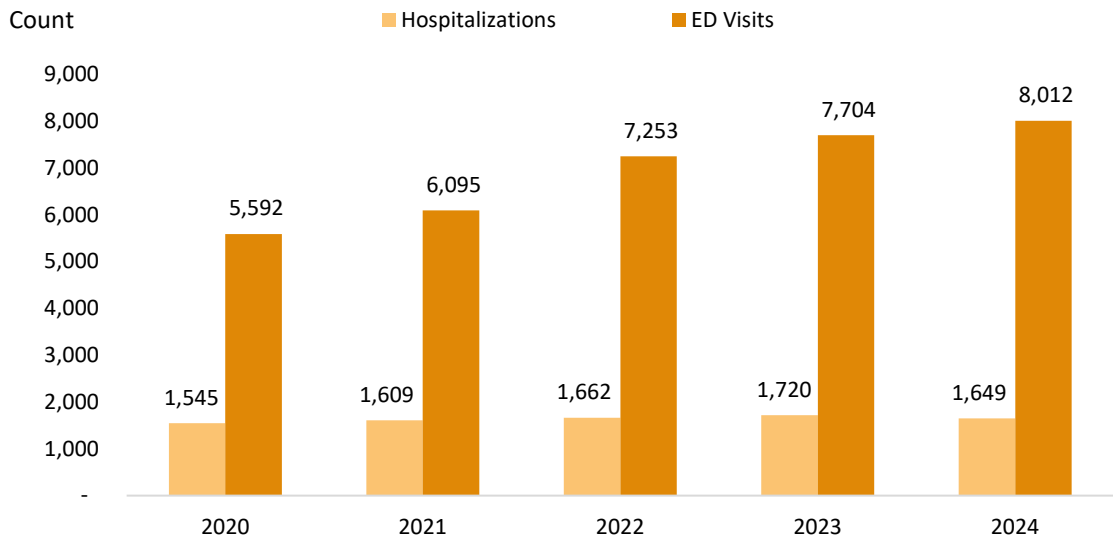
Figure 6: Fall-Related Deaths by Type of Fall (2015-2024)



Nonfatal Unintentional Fall-Related Hospitalizations & Emergency Department (ED) Visits

From 2020 to 2024, there were 8,185 nonfatal unintentional fall-related hospitalizations and 34,656 emergency department (ED) visits among South Dakotans aged 65 years and older. Fall-related emergency department visits have increased 43% from 2020 to 2024.

Figure 7: Fall-Related Hospitalizations and ED Visits, South Dakota (2020-2024)



Demographics

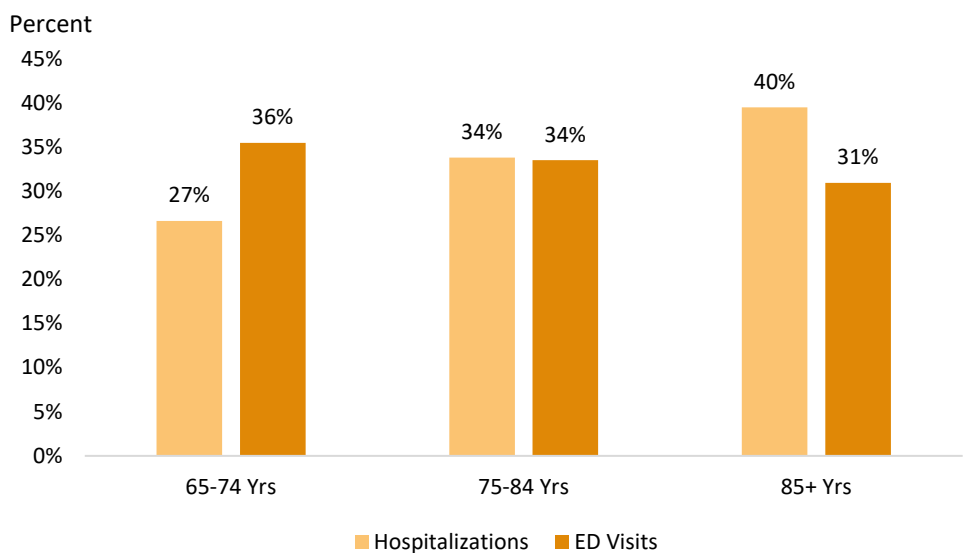
Sex

Overall, females aged 65 years and older are more likely to receive care for a fall-related injury than males. Females made up 62% of nonfatal visits and had a rate 1.5 times higher than males (6,125.6 vs 4,217.7 per 100,000), 2020-2024.

Age

South Dakotans over the age of 65 years are at an increased risk for fall-related injuries. The largest proportion of fall-related ED visits are among adults aged 65-74 years. In contrast, the risk for severe injuries resulting in hospitalizations increased with age and the highest proportion of hospitalizations were among adults aged 85 years and older.

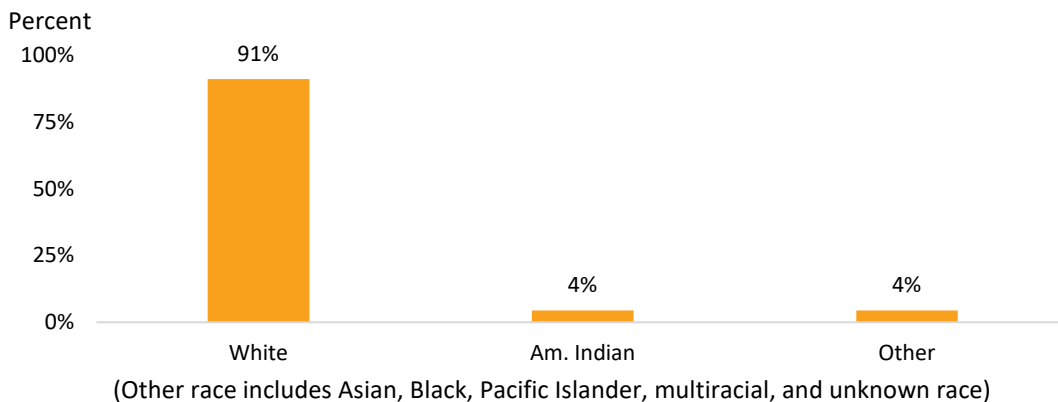
Figure 8: Fall-Related Injuries by Age Group (2020-2024)



Race

From 2020-2024, the largest proportion of nonfatal fall-related ED visits and hospitalizations were among the White population (Figure 9).

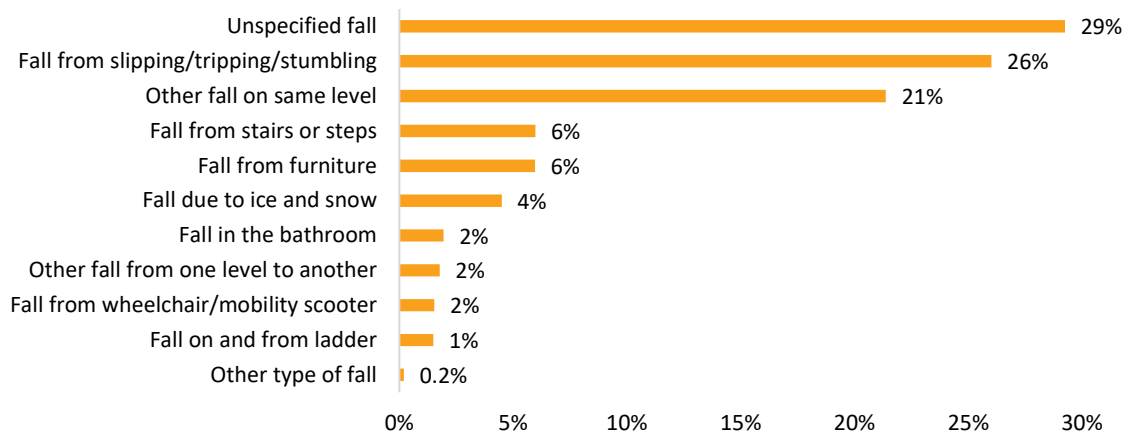
Figure 9: Fall-Related Injuries by Race (2020-2024)



Types of Falls

Different types of unintentional falls can lead to injury among older adults. Of the 42,841 nonfatal falls requiring an ED visit or hospitalization, the top three causes of injuries include unspecified falls, falls from slipping, tripping, or stumbling, and other falls on the same level (Figure 10).

Figure 10: Fall-Related Injuries by Type of Fall (2020-2024)



Patient Discharge Status

The patient discharge status is the patient's status or disposition at the end of service and/or time of facility discharge. Most fall-related injuries seen in the emergency department don't require additional care services, with 77% of the older adult fall-related visits being discharged to home. Whereas for severe injuries that require hospitalization, additional treatment and care may be needed for older adults. For fall-related hospitalizations, 43% are discharged/transferred to a skilled nursing facility and 20% are discharged to home. The need for additional services/treatment does increase with the age of the patient.

Fall Prevention Resources

Adults aged 65 years and older are at an increased risk for a fall that can impact their health and ability to remain independent. You can reduce your chance of falling or help a loved one prevent falls by visiting the links below and learning about available resources and how to reduce risks for falls.

- To learn about the South Dakota Fall Prevention Coalition, visit <https://doh.sd.gov/programs/fall-prevention-coalition/>.
- To learn about other available state and national resources, visit <https://doh.sd.gov/health-data-reports/injury-prevention/unintentional-falls-data/>.

Data Sources and Methods

Data in this report may differ from other reports due to how the data was analyzed. See below for data sources and analysis methods.

Data Sources:

Mortality data used in this report comes from the South Dakota Department of Health Vital Statistics, which represents South Dakota residents. Data from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS) is utilized for national and state comparisons.

Hospital and ED data comes from the South Dakota Association of Healthcare Organizations (SDAHO), which represents South Dakota residents and reflects nonfatal visits by year of discharge. This data does not include cases from Indian Health Services hospitals or Veterans Affairs medical centers.

Methods:

Death records are analyzed for the presence of unintentional fall-related death codes in the cause of death field. Injury fatality ICD-10 codes used in the report include W00-W19.

Hospitalization and ED data was analyzed from the injury discharge subset for non-fatal unintentional fall-related injury codes in any field. Injury ICD-10-CM codes used and analysis methods can be found here:

<https://resources.cste.org/Injury-Surveillance-Methods-Toolkit/Home/GeneralInjuryIndicators>.