

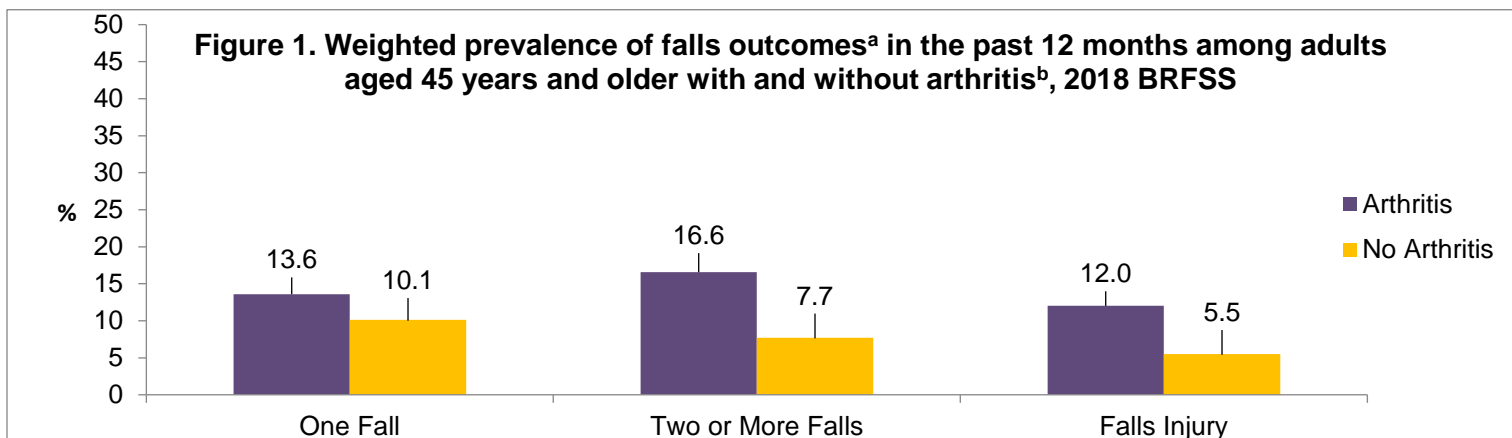
New York State adults with arthritis are at increased risk for falls and fall-related injuries.



In New York State (NYS) and nationally, falls are the leading cause of injury-related morbidity and mortality among older adults.¹ Nearly one-quarter (22.5%) of NYS adults aged 45 years and older reported at least one fall in the past 12 months. According to the 2018 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) data:

- **Older adults with arthritis are significantly more likely than adults without arthritis to report two or more falls (16.6% vs. 7.7%) and fall-related injuries (12.0% vs. 5.5%) in the past 12 months (Figure 1).**

Effective arthritis physical activity programs improve function and reduce pain by correcting muscle weakness and balance dysfunction. Effective fall prevention programs use exercise or physical therapy approaches to improve gait, balance and lower body strength to reduce fall risk.¹



Public Health Opportunity

[CDC's Stopping Elderly Accidents, Deaths & Injuries \(STEADI\) initiative](#)² offers a coordinated approach to implementing falls prevention. To reduce the risk of falls among adults with arthritis, public health practitioners and health care providers can:

- Screen older adults and people with disabilities for fall risk.
- Develop a fall prevention plan of care.
- Counsel adults with arthritis and other at-risk adults on the benefits of physical activity to reduce fall risk. Share this [Osteoarthritis and Falls patient education booklet](#) from the National Council on Aging with adults with arthritis.
- Refer at-risk adults to [evidence-based fall prevention programs](#) that improve physical conditioning.

Please visit www.health.ny.gov/arthritis and www.health.ny.gov/prevention/injury_prevention/falls for more information on arthritis management and fall prevention programs currently available in NY.

Data Source: 2018 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System.

^aFalls were defined as self-reported number of falls (or when a person unintentionally comes to rest on the ground or another lower level) in past 12 months. Injury from a fall was defined as self-reported injury caused by a fall in past 12 months that caused respondent to limit their regular activities for ≥ 1 day or to go see a doctor

^bArthritis is defined based on a "yes" response to the question, "Have you ever been told by a doctor or other health professional that you have some form of arthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, gout, lupus, or fibromyalgia?"

References:

1. Barbour KE, et al. State-Specific Prevalence of Falls and Fall Injuries among Adults Aged 45 Years and Older with and without Arthritis--- United States, 2012 *Morb Mort Week Rep*, May 2nd, 2014
2. Johnston, Y., Bergen, G., Bauer, M., Parker, E., Wentworth, L., McFadden, M., Reome, C., Garnett, M. (2018). Implementation of the Stopping Elderly Accidents Deaths and Injuries (STEADI) Initiative in Primary Care: An Outcome Evaluation. *The Gerontologist*, gny101, <https://doi.org/10.1093/geront/gny101>