In New York State (NYS) and nationally, falls are the leading cause of injury-related morbidity and mortality among older adults. 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

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

**Figure 1. Weighted prevalence of falls outcomes\(^a\) in the past 12 months among adults aged 45 years and older with and without arthritis\(^b\), 2018 BRFSS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Arthritis</th>
<th>No Arthritis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One Fall</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
<td>10.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or More Falls</td>
<td>16.6%</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Falls Injury</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**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](http://www.health.ny.gov/arthritis) and [www.health.ny.gov/prevention/injury_prevention/falls](http://www.health.ny.gov/prevention/injury_prevention/falls) for more information on arthritis management and fall prevention programs currently available in NY.

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