

# History of falls linked to post-surgery complications in seniors

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Researcher suggests improving 'preoperative risk assessment.'

(HealthDay)—Seniors who've had one or more falls in the six months prior to surgery are at increased risk for poorer outcomes after their operation, according to a new study.

Researchers looked at 235 people, average age 74, who had colorectal and heart operations. Thirty-three percent of the [patients](#) reported having at least one fall in the six months before [surgery](#).

Those who had [falls](#) were more likely to have [postoperative complications](#) than those without falls: 59 percent vs. 25 percent in the colorectal surgery group, and 39 percent vs. 15 percent in the heart surgery group.

Patients who had falls were also more likely to be discharged from the hospital to a care facility, and had a higher rate of readmission to the hospital within 30 days, according to the study published online Oct. 9 in the journal *JAMA Surgery*.

"Given the high volume of surgical care provided for the elderly population, improving preoperative risk assessment for the older adult is becoming increasingly important," wrote study author Dr. Teresa Jones, of the University of Colorado School of Medicine, and colleagues.

More than one-third of all inpatient operations in the United States are performed on patients 65 and older, and that proportion will increase in coming decades. However, current risk assessments of patients before surgery do not include the risks associated with being frail, the researchers noted.

**More information:** The U.S. National Institute on Aging has more about [surgery](#).

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