

## Fall Prevention

### When do Falls Happen?

Falls happen when:

- You are weak or tired
- You have problems seeing
- Your floors/stairs are slippery or wet
- You are trying to walk in the dark
- You are not physically fit
- You take medicines that cause weakness, sleepiness, confusion or dizziness
- You have safety hazards in your home (rugs, coffee tables, pets, electrical cords)

### Your Risk of Falling Increases When You Have:

- Fallen before
- Balance issues
- Chronic issues like arthritis or neuropathy
- Depression
- Safety hazards in the home
- A lot of medicines to take
- Memory loss
- Muscle weakness
- Problems walking
- Vision problems

### How to Reduce Your Risk of Falling

#### Take Care of Your Health:

- Exercise regularly to build strength and reduce fatigue.
- Stay hydrated. Dehydration can make it easier to lose your balance.
- Have your eyes checked regularly. Notify your health care team if your vision changes at all.
- Talk to your doctor if any of your medicines can make you sleepy, light-headed, sluggish or confused. Ask how to reduce these side effects or if you can take another medicine.

#### Take Extra Precautions:

- Do not walk in the dark. Use night lights and turn on the lights when you enter a room. Install timers, “clap-on” or motion sensors on your lights.
- Remove small area rugs and throw rugs that can slip. Rubber mats are a good replacement.
- Put frequently used items in easy-to-reach places.
- Make sure your hallways, stairs, and pathways are clear of clutter.
- Use the handrails on staircases and apply non-slip treads on stairs if possible.
- Sit in chairs that do not move and have arm rests to help when you sit down and stand up.
- Wear shoes that have firm, flat, non-slip soles. Slip-on shoes can increase the risk of falls.
- Replace the rubber tips on canes and walkers when they become worn.
- Apply non-slip decals or use a non-slip mat in the bathtub or shower. Consider using a shower chair.
- Install grab bars near the toilet, bathtub or shower.
- Make sure your bed is easy to get in and out of.
- Immediately clean up spilled food and liquids.

## Take Control of Your Health: 6 Steps to Prevent a Fall

- 1 Find a good balance and exercise program**  
Look to build balance, strength, and flexibility. Contact your local Area Agency on Aging for referrals. Find a program you like and take a friend. 
- 2 Talk to your health care provider**  
Ask for an assessment of your risk of falling. Share your history of recent falls. 
- 3 Regularly review your medications with your doctor or pharmacist**  
Make sure side effects aren't increasing your risk of falling. Take medications only as prescribed. 
- 4 Get your vision and hearing checked annually and update your eyeglasses**  
Your eyes and ears are key to keeping you on your feet. 
- 5 Keep your home safe**  
Remove tripping hazards, increase lighting, make stairs safe, and install grab bars in key areas. 
- 6 Talk to your family members**  
Enlist their support in taking simple steps to stay safe. Falls are not just a seniors' issue. 

Photo courtesy of the National Council on Aging, [ncoa.org](http://ncoa.org)

### When to Call your Healthcare Team

If you have any questions regarding fall prevention, call your healthcare team at 732-235-2465.

If you are in need of immediate assistance, please call 732-235-2465 and select the option that best meets your needs.