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
- Problem’s 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.

When to Call your Healthcare Team
If you have any questions regarding fall prevention, call your healthcare team at 732-235-2465.

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