



Fall Prevention Guide

There are two major causes of falls:

Health and age related changes, such as:

- Use of more than four medications simultaneously
- History of falls
- Difficulty with balance or walking
- Using an assistive device
- Poor vision
- Weakness in the legs or trunk



Hazardous situations in the home or the environment, such as:

- Slippery floors
- Loose rugs
- Clutter
- Inadequate lighting

Most falls in the home take place in the bathroom, bedroom or stairs.

What you can do to decrease your risk of falls:

- Keep up with your medications: Review medications with your doctor or pharmacist and know their side effects. Some meds can make you dizzy, drowsy or unsteady.
- Have your hearing and eyesight checked on regular basis. Inner ear and vision problems can affect balance.
- Exercise regularly to improve muscle flexibility and strength: In therapy, a physical therapist will review your medical history, examine you and will design an individualized exercise program with an emphasis on strength, flexibility and balance to help decrease your risk of falls.
- Use assistive device: Canes and walkers can support ambulation, improve stability and provide reassurance to individuals who are afraid of falling.
- Proper shoe wear: Wear nonslip, low heeled shoes that are snug. Don't walk around in socks that may be slippery.
- Use good lighting: Have a lamp or light switch that you can easily reach without getting out of bed. Keep night lights around the house and in bathrooms.
- Keep clutter out: Keep electrical cords out of pathways. Remove rugs that tend to slip or attach nonslip backing so that they lay flat.
- In the bathroom: Use bath mats with suction cups. Add grab bars in shower and toilet areas. Consider sitting on bench or stool in the shower and using an elevated toilet seat.