

Fall Prevention

What is it?

Fall prevention includes:

- Ways to help you move safely so that you don't fall.
- Things you can do around your house and outside to make it safer so that you don't fall.

Why is it important?

- One in four Americans aged 65 and older fall each year.
- Every second of every day, an older adult suffers a fall in the U.S.
- Falls are the leading cause of both fatal and nonfatal injuries for those 65 and older.
- The risk of falling increases as you age.
- *However, falls are not an inevitable part of growing older! There are reasons for falls and you can lower your risk to prevent falls.*



What can cause me to fall?

- Isolation
- Muscle weakness
- Balance or gait problems
- Blood pressure that drops when you stand or sit up
- Problems with your eyesight or hearing
- Foot problems (e.g., numbness or pain)
- Medications that make you sleepy or dizzy
- Safety hazards in your home
- Confusion
- Fear of falling



What can I do to prevent falls and stay safe?

- Stay active because regular exercise helps to keep your muscles strong and your joints flexible.
- Stay connected to others. For example, join a balance class offered in person and/or online.
- Learn to meditate and use mindful practices to help with focus throughout the day.
- Get enough sleep.
- Have your eyesight and hearing tested regularly since even small changes can increase your risk for falling.
- Talk to your doctor or pharmacist about the medicines you are on and whether they make you sleepy or dizzy.
- Limit the amount of alcohol you drink.
- Sit up and/or stand up slowly. Changing positions too quickly can cause your blood pressure to drop and make you lightheaded.
- Sit down when getting dressed.
- Wear non-skid shoes and socks that fit well.
- Use assistive devices such as a cane or walker if needed. Talk to a physical or occupational therapist who can help you with proper size and use.
- Install grab bars in the bathroom and shower.
- Use a shower seat so you don't have to stand in the shower.
- Use non-slip strips or mats in the shower, bathtub and on bathroom floors.
- Remove throw rugs as this slight change in floor height can increase falls.
- Use bright lightbulbs around the house, especially around stairs.
- Use bathroom nightlights, automatic sensors or a flashlight to light up pathways for nighttime bathroom visits.

