

Are you at risk for falling checklist

As you get older, your risk for falling increases. There are other factors that can increase your risk of falling. These include:

- You are over the age of 65.
- You have changes in your balance, strength or flexibility.
- You have changes in your eye sight, hearing or memory.
- You take more than one medication, including over-the-counter medications and herbal supplements.

- You feel dizzy or light headed sometimes.
- You have trouble walking or getting out of a chair.
- You have had a fall or have almost fallen in the past.
- You have a fear of falling.

- You live alone.
- You are not physically active.
- You are not eating well.
- You have no one to help you with household activities.

If you are worried about falling talk with your health care provider about what you can do to prevent a fall. There are also things that you can do around your house to keep it safe and help prevent a fall.

To decrease your risk of falling at home

Glasses

- Keep your glasses clean!
- Attach a string to your glasses or keep your glasses by your bedside or chair. Put them on before you get up.

Clothing and footwear

- Wear non-slip footwear/shoes with rubber soles and flat heels. It is important to wear shoes that will not fall off your feet, even indoors. You should not walk around in stocking feet.
- Wear clothing that fits well. Loose clothing such as a long bathrobe or pants that fall below your ankle could cause you to trip.

General Ideas

- Carpet and stair treads should be attached firmly to the floor. Old carpets with bald spots should be replaced.
- Keep the floor clear of electrical and telephone cords.
- Have phones in each room or keep a cordless phone with you so you are not rushing to it when it rings.
- Do not rush to the bathroom. Wear pads if you lose urine sometimes.
- Avoid shag carpet or carpets with thick under padding.
- Know where your pets are. You do not want to trip over them!
- Keep pathways clear of ice and slippery surfaces.

Bedroom

- Keep a lamp within easy reach where you sleep and a night light on in case you need to get up at night. Make sure that the path to the bathroom is well lit and free of clutter.

Bathrooms and kitchens

- Many floors are slippery such as ceramic and glossy hardwood. Floors can also get very slippery when they get wet. Wear non-slip footwear and wipe up spills!
- Take away any rugs or floor mats that slide easily.
- Keep food and things that you use often in an area where you can easily reach them. Do not stand on chairs or bend down to pick things off the floor. Use a long handled reacher to pick things up.
- Put grab bars in areas where you may have had a hard time getting up from either a sitting or lying position. You could put them near the bathtub, toilet or your bed.
- Do not use soap holders, towel racks, sinks or counter tops for support when getting in and out of the bathtub or getting on and off the toilet. They are not made to take your weight, and if your hands are wet, they may be slippery.

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