



Fall Prevention At Home

Nearly 1/3 of all individuals over the age of 65 experiences a fall each year. A fall can result in injury, leading to a loss of independence. Even without injury a fall can leave a person feeling fearful. This fear may cause them to limit their activity level, leading to a gradual decline in mobility and further imbalance.

Aging often leads to changes in our vision, hearing, strength and coordination. We also may experience changes related to chronic illnesses such as arthritis, diabetes, heart disease or an acute event such as a stroke. Although these changes may increase the risk of a fall occurring, there are preventative measures that can be taken.

The following are recommendations to improve the safety of your home environment and to reduce the risk of falling at home.

Entryways and Stairs:

- ✦ Install handrails on all stairways
- ✦ Keep walkways and steps clear of snow, ice and clutter
- ✦ Apply non-skid material to steps
- ✦ Paint edges of steps with a contrasting color to help even those with just mild visual deficits
- ✦ Place a chair near the entrance of your home for a rest or to remove or put on shoes

Throughout the Home:

- ✦ Keep walkways clear of obstacles
- ✦ Keep areas well lit. Use lamp shades or frosted bulbs to reduce glare and place night-lights in the halls and bathroom
- ✦ Remove throw rugs
- ✦ Be sure carpets and vinyl flooring are adhered well and lay smooth
- ✦ Keep a cordless phone with you at all times
- ✦ Keep commonly used items within reach
- ✦ Have light switches accessible where you rest and placed at the both ends of stairways and halls
- ✦ Wear supportive shoes with non-skid soles. Avoid loose fitting slippers
- ✦ Be sure all equipment used for assistance is well maintained

Bathroom:

- ✦ Place grab bars in tub, shower and toilet areas
- ✦ Consider a raised toilet seat if getting off the toilet is difficult for you
- ✦ Consider a tub/shower chair if showering or bathing is difficult
- ✦ Place non-skid mat or adhesive strips in the tub or shower
- ✦ Use rubber-backed mats outside of the tub/shower
- ✦ Be careful when choosing bath/shower or floor cleaning products, some may make the surface more slippery

How to get up from a fall

1. Prepare



Getting up quickly or the wrong way could make an injury worse. If you are hurt, call for help using a medical alert service or a telephone.



Look around for a sturdy piece of furniture, or the bottom of a staircase. Don't try and stand up on your own.



Roll over onto your side by turning your head in the direction you are trying to roll, then move your shoulders, arm, hips, and finally your leg over.

2. Rise



Push your upper body up. Lift your head and pause for a few moments to steady yourself.



Slowly get up on your hands and knees and crawl to a sturdy chair.



Place your hands on the seat of the chair and slide one foot forward so it is flat on the floor.

3. Sit



Keep the other leg bent with the knee on the floor.



From this kneeling position, slowly rise and turn your body to sit in the chair.



Sit for a few minutes before you try to do anything else.

Talk to your primary care provider about having a fall-risk evaluation. The fact that you have fallen once means you have a high risk of falling again.