

Risk Factors that Contribute to Falls

Each year, millions of people who are 65 and older have experienced a fall, however, less than half tell their doctor. Falling once doubles your chances of falling again. Since most falls can be prevented, it is important to have a discussion with your doctor about falls.

How you can Reduce your Risk of Falling

- **Talk with your doctor about falls**
 - Let your doctor know if you notice increased weakness, decreased balance or endurance, and dizziness.
 - If you do fall, call your doctor to let them know.
- **Review your medications**
 - Make a list of the prescriptions and over-the-counter medications and supplements for your provider to review. Contact your provider or pharmacist to review your medications for side effects or interactions that may increase your risk of falling.
- **Keep moving**
 - Find a physical activity or exercise program that you enjoy that focuses on strength, balance, endurance, and flexibility.
 - Review online resources for exercises you can do in your home. One resource is listed below:
 - -Go4 Life www.Go4Life.nia.nih.gov
- **Vision and hearing**
 - Wear your hearing aids and glasses when you need them. Keep your eyewear clean to ensure a clear view of your surroundings.
- **Wear proper footwear**
 - Wear non-skid, rubber-soled, low-heeled shoes, or lace-up shoes with non-skid soles that fully support your feet. Discard worn out or poor fitting footwear.
- **Use an assistive device**
 - Appropriate use of canes and walkers can prevent falls. If your doctor tells you to use a cane or walker, make sure it is the right size for you and the wheels roll smoothly.
- **Address home safety**
 - Six out of every 10 falls happen at home⁶, use a safety checklist to identify opportunities to reduce falls risks inside and outside your home.
 - www.cdc.gov/steady/pdf/STEADI-FactSheet-RiskFactors-508.pdf
- **Stay hydrated and be well rested**
 - Dehydration can cause common complications including low blood pressure, weakness and dizziness, all of which can increase the risk of falls.
 - Drink at regular intervals throughout the day, especially when engaging in physical activity.
 - Maintain a good sleep schedule to ensure you are well rested.
- **Stand up slowly**
 - Getting up too quickly can cause your blood pressure to drop. That can make you feel wobbly. Change position slowly and intentionally.

References and Resources

www.ncoa.org/wp-content/uploads/Fact-Sheet_Falls-Prevention.pdf

www.lifeline.ca/en/resources/14-exercises-for-seniors-to-improve-strength-and-balance/

www.Go4Life.nia.nih.gov

www.lifeline.ca/en/resources/reducing-falls-risk-home/

https://assets.aarp.org/external_sites/caregiving/checklists/checklist_homeSafety.html

www.cdc.gov/homeandrecreationalafety/Falls/adultfalls.html

www.cdc.gov/features/falls-older-adults/index.html