

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. Two resources are 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