

Preventing Falls

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“In the United States, one of every three adults 65 years old or older falls each year.”

--Centers for Disease Control/Sattin

Don't become a statistic; learn how to reduce your risk of falling!

What can you do to help reduce your risk of falling?

I. Home Safety Checklist:

Throw Rugs

- Throw rugs can be a tripping hazard.
- Make sure rugs are firmly fastened to the floor or have a nonskid backing.
- If possible, eliminate the use of throw rugs.

Lighting

- Make sure the rooms in your home are well lit, to avoid tripping over objects that are hard to see.
- Nightlights, in the bedroom, hallway, and bathroom can make night trips to the bathroom safer.
- Keep a flashlight beside the bed.

Stairways

- Make sure broken or worn steps are repaired.
- Stairs should be well lit.
- Use handrails when going up or down stairs.
- Handrails should be sturdy and securely fastened to the wall or staircase.
- If you don't have handrails consider putting them in.

Clutter

- Always keep floors and walkways free of clutter such as, shoes, magazines, and electrical cords which can be tripping hazards.

Furniture

- Avoid sitting on low furniture.
- Try to sit on furniture that is firm with armrests and good back support that you can get in and out of easily.

Bathroom

- Showers or tubs should have a nonskid surface or mat.
- If possible, install grab bars or handrails in the shower, or on the walls around the bathtub, and alongside the toilet, where necessary.
- Place a slip-resistant rug next to the shower or bathtub for safe exit and entry.

Kitchen

- Immediately clean up spills on the floor.
- Store food, dishes, and other cooking items at easy-to-reach waist high level.
- Don't stand on chairs or boxes to reach upper cupboards.
- Use a non-skid floor wax.

Clothing/Footwear

- Avoid clothing that drags on the ground.
- Wear well fitting shoes with firm non-skid, non-friction soles.

II. Health and Safety Checklist

Medications

- If you take four or more medications per day, you could be at risk for falling.
- Multiple medications can cause dizziness, drowsiness and balance problems.
- Review your medications with your doctor at least once a year.

Vision

- Cataracts and other vision problems associated with ageing can impair your vision and cause you to fall.
- Have your eyes examined once a year.

Hearing

- Inner ear problems can cause dizziness that can lead to falls.

Exercise

- Exercise can help improve strength, balance, coordination, and flexibility.

Please Note: This list does not encompass all the risk factors for falling, nor does it imply that complying with these guidelines will prevent falling from happening. This checklist was developed using information from the **CDC** and the **Temple University Fall Prevention Project for Older Adults** (Newton, 1997). For a more comprehensive list please refer to these websites.

- (1) Fall Prevention Project For Older Adults (Temple University): **Health and Safety Checklist:** www.temple.edu/older_adult/cioeng.htm or **In-Home Safety Checklist:** www.temple.edu/older_adult/IHSCEng.htm
Feet and Shoes: www.temple.edu/older_adult/appendixB.htm
Low Impact Activity Program: www.temple.edu/older_adult/appendixA.htm
- (2) San Francisco Department of Public Health
Home Safety Checklist Summary: www.dph.sf.ca.us/HealthInfo/HomeSafety.htm
- (3) **CDC Falls Among Older Adults:** www.cdc.gov/ncip/duip/SummaryOfFalls.htm

References

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* www.ronjones.org **“High-Performance Health” (12-4-02)**