

# Preventing Falls and Injuries

## Taking care of yourself

Did you know?

A fall can be a life-altering event.

More than 1 in 3 adults aged 65 and older fall each year.

Falls are the leading cause of injury in older adults.



People of all ages fall and there are many reasons why.

- Changes in vision can affect your balance, make you less stable, and increase your chance of falling.
- Side effects of medications can make you drowsy, light-headed, or dizzy.

Taking care of yourself can lower your chance of falling.

- Get regular exercise, which can improve muscle tone, flexibility, and balance, and keep you strong. Choose exercises or activities that develop balance and coordination.
- Talk with your primary care provider and team pharmacist about your medications and their side effects on balance and coordination.
- Stand up slowly after sitting or lying down.
- Consider using a cane or walker to help you feel steadier.
- Be careful on uneven and icy or wet surfaces, or avoid them if you can.
- Wear shoes that have good support, with low heels and a rubber sole or thin non-slip sole. Avoid wearing only socks.
- Hold on to handrails when going up and down the stairs.
- Limit drinking alcoholic beverages. They can slow your reflexes and change your sense of balance.
- Don't take chances, like walking on a freshly washed floor or standing on a chair to reach for something.

**Take care of yourself.  
You can lower your chance of a fall and injury.**

# Preventing Falls and Injuries

## Taking care of your environment

Taking care of your home environment can lower your chance of falling.

- Keep stairs and pathways clean and free of clutter.
- Remove papers, books, clothes, shoes, and other items that could cause you to trip.
- Tack down telephone wires and electrical cords.
- Consider installing 'grab bars' next to toilets, showers, and tubs.
- Place non-slip mats in the tub and on the shower floor.
- Secure area rugs with double-sided tape.
- Remove small throw rugs.
- Put no-slip strips on wood and tile floors.
- Put items you use often where you can reach them without needing a stepstool.
- Keep staircases and entranceways well lit.
- Securely mount handrails on both sides of all staircases.
- Improve lighting.
  - Use nightlights in the bedroom and bathroom.
  - Turn lights on if you get up during the night.
- Arrange furniture so that paths are clear when you walk. Avoid moving things around.
- During summer months, keep your home cool with air conditioning or a fan. Heat can make you dizzy.



**Take care of your surroundings.  
You can lower your chance of a fall and injury.**