



Be Safe: Prevent Falls

Healthy Living Message

What's Important to Know?

Falls cause the most fractures and are the leading cause of injury deaths among older adults. About half of all falls happen at home, and there are practical things you can do to reduce your risk of falling there. Engaging in regular physical activity, monitoring or avoiding certain medications, and getting your eyes checked may reduce your risk of falling. Other things you can do to prevent falls are:

- Remove small throw rugs to prevent tripping and falling. If you choose to use them, anchor them with double-sided tape or anti-slip mats underneath.
- Improve the lighting in your home. As you get older, you need brighter lights to help you see well. Hang light-weight curtains or shades to reduce glare.
- Wear shoes inside and outside the house. Avoid going barefoot or wearing slippers.
- Remove things (papers, books, clothes, shoes) from stairs and places where you walk, so you will be less likely to trip. Install handrails and lights in all staircases.
- Keep items you use often in cabinets that you can reach easily without using a step stool.



- Install grab bars next to your toilet and in your tub or shower. Make sure you use non-slip mats in the bathtub and on shower floors
- Use a walker or a cane for extra support.
- Physical activity, especially balance training exercises, may reduce your risk of falling by increasing strength and balance. Lack of physical activity leads to weakness and increases your chances of falling.

Want to Know More?

If you want to learn more about how to prevent falls, talk with your VA health care team. They can also help if you have questions about making a healthy living change. For more information go to the VHA National Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention: www.prevention.va.gov/Healthy_Living/Be_Safe_Prevent_Falls.asp

Resources

- VHA National Center for Health Promotion & Disease Prevention: www.prevention.va.gov. Go to the Healthy Living tab and choose “Be Safe”
- Veterans Health Library: www.veteranshealthlibrary.va.gov, search “Preventing Falls”
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention National Center for Injury Prevention and Control - Prevent Falls in Older Adults: www.cdc.gov/homeandrecreationsafety/falls/index.html