

FALLS

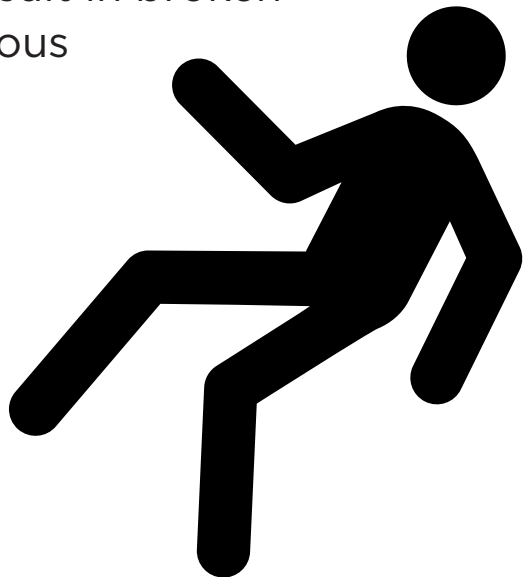
Causes & Prevention Education



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WHY IS EDUCATION ABOUT FALLS IMPORTANT?

- Over one in three people age 65 years or older fall every year
- The risk of falling rises with age
- Falls often happen in the home (Example: Bathroom, Kitchen, Dining Room)
- Falls are usually the reason older adults go to the emergency room
- Having a fall can result in broken bones or other serious injury and result in hospitalization or disability
- Fear of falling can affect your mood and may limit your social activities



MEDICAL PROBLEMS CAN INCREASE THE RISK OF FALLS

Common problems include:

- Diabetes (High or Low Blood Sugar)
- High or Low Blood Pressure
- Parkinson's Disease
- Heart Disease
- Thyroid Problems
- Nerve Problems
- Dizziness
- Weakness
- Confusion
- Visual problems (glaucoma, cataracts, macular degeneration)



DIZZINESS MAY SIGNAL SOMETHING IS WRONG!

Low blood pressure	Low blood sugar
Anemia (low blood count)	High blood sugar
High blood pressure	Rapid or Irregular Heart Rate
Stroke	Very Slow Heart Rate
Too Much Body Fluid Loss (dehydration)	Some Medications

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- If you are dizzy, first, sit down immediately until the dizziness goes away.
- You or the caregiver should check your blood pressure.
- Check your blood sugar if you are diabetic (dizziness can occur if blood sugar gets too low).
- If blood sugar is low, drink or eat something with sugar, like juice or a hard candy.
- Report any dizziness to your doctor as soon as possible.
- When arising from a lying or sitting position, get up slowly



- Eat foods rich in iron (such as meat, beans, leafy veggies, dried fruit) to avoid becoming anemic.
- Take blood pressure medications as directed and do not stop taking them without the advice of your healthcare provider.
- If you are diabetic, pay close attention to your blood sugar.
- Drink at least 5 to 8 cups (small cups, not mugs) of water each day (staying hydrated is essential to good body health).
- Drink more fluids when you have diarrhea or a fever as both can lead to dehydration.



MEDICATIONS THAT CAN INCREASE THE RISK OF FALLS

- **Opioid pain medications** (Example: Morphine, Hydrocodone, Oxycodone)
- **Allergy medications** (Example: Benadryl, Phenergan, Atarax, Claritin)
- **Muscle relaxants** (Example: Robaxin, Flexeril, Tizanidine)
- **Benzodiazepines** (Example: Ativan, Xanax, Halcion)
- **Sedative-Hypnotics, Anti-Anxiety Medicines** (Example: Sleep medications like Ambien, Restoril, Dalmane, Valium)
- **Antidepressants** (Example: Elavil, Sinequan, Pamelor)
- **Cough Syrups** (Example: Robitussin DM, Delsym, Vicks, Dayquil Cough) - These have opioid-like effects.

- **Prescription Medicines to treat overactive bladder** (Example: Ditropan and Detrol)

Before taking any over-the-counter medications like Tylenol PM, Benadryl, cough syrups or other supplements, please talk to your doctor first. These medication may increase your risk for falls.

WHAT CAN I DO TO PROTECT MYSELF FROM FALLS?

1

Maintain regular
physical activity & eat a
balanced diet



2

Keep bones &
muscles healthy



3

Get regular eye
checkups (especially if
you have changes)



4

Limit alcohol intake and
take your medications
as prescribed



5

Get adequate rest -
a good night's sleep
is important!



6

Check your blood
pressure and heart
rate regularly, and your
blood sugar if diabetic
(especially if you feel
dizzy or weak)



7

Tell your provider if
your heart rate, blood
pressure, or blood
sugar are not in the
normal range



8

Keep well hydrated -
drink 5-8 cups of
water a day



STEPS TO TAKE TO PREVENT FALLS

- Wear proper shoes (low-heels, lace-ups, slip-on shoes that do not require laces, and shoes with non-skid soles).
- Use assistive devices (Example: walker) when feeling unsteady. Walkers and canes need to be prescribed by a provider or physical therapist for your height and gait and balance issues. It is better not to use anyone else's assistive device.
- Discuss medication side-effects with your doctor (even over-the-counter medications and supplements).
- There are some medical alarms and devices that can be worn to allow persons at risk for falls to feel safer.



1

Reduce clutter on floors & in kitchen including loose cords



2

Ensure adequate lighting (keep a light on)



3

Have grab bars in the bathroom near toilet, tub/shower



4

Have handrails on both sides of the stairs



5

Do not use throw rugs or small area rugs



6

Do not climb a ladder or stand on a chair or table



7

Do not sit on chairs that
have roller wheels



8

Avoid carrying large or
heavy items or pets up
and down the stairs



REFERENCES:

- nia.nih.gov/health/prevent-falls-and-fractures
- ncgi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5915247/
- ncoa.org/health-aging/falls-prevention/

*Leaves are
supposed to fall.
People aren't.*



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