

Fall Prevention

Did you know 1 in 4 older Americans experience a fall every year? Falls are the leading cause of both fatal and nonfatal injuries for people 65 years and older. Falls can result in hip fractures, broken bones, and head injuries. Falls without a major injury can still cause older adults to become fearful or depressed, making it difficult for them to stay active. If you are an older adult or have an aging parent, grandparent, or friend, reducing the risks of falling is a great way to stay healthy and independent for as long as possible. The good news about falls is that most of them can be prevented; the key is knowing where to look.

Some common factors that can lead to falls are:

- **Balance and gait:** With age, many people coordination, flexibility, and balance, which makes it easier to fall. Increasing strength and stretching into your daily habits can reduce your fall risk.
- **Vision:** In the aging eye, less light reaches the retina, making contrasting edges, tripping hazards, and obstacles harder to see. Try installing extra lighting in hallways, bathrooms, and other dark areas of your house.
- **Medications:** Some prescription and over-the-counter medicines can cause dizziness, dehydration, or interactions with other medications, which can lead to falls. Your medications may need to be changed or modified. Ask your pharmacist to review your medications for possible side effects and interactions.
- **Environment:** Simple home modifications can reduce tripping hazards such as removing throw rugs, installing grab bars in bathrooms, and adding more lighting throughout your home.

Reference: Adapted from the *National Council on Aging*