

Fall Prevention

Why should I be concerned about falls?

Each year, millions of adults suffer falls that cause hip fractures or head trauma, both of which can increase the risk of early disability or death.

Here are some tips to help keep you on your feet and moving forward safely:

- **Exercise regularly.** Get up and move! Building muscles and keeping ligaments lean and strong helps you walk with confidence.
- **Regularly review your medications with your doctor and/or pharmacist.** This includes medications prescribed by all of your healthcare providers and any over-the-counter drugs, vitamins, supplements, or herbs you are using. Some combinations may cause side effects that increase your risk of falling. Take your medications only as prescribed.
- **Ask your doctor to assess your risk for falling.** Be sure to share your history of any recent falls.
- **Get your vision and hearing checked every year and update your eyeglasses.** Your eyes and ears are key to keeping you on your feet.



Check your risk for falling

Circle "Yes" or "No" for each statement below.

YES 2	NO 0	I have fallen in the past year.
YES 2	NO 0	I use or have been advised to use a cane or walker to get around safely.
YES 1	NO 0	Sometimes I feel unsteady when I am walking.
YES 1	NO 0	I steady myself by holding onto furniture when walking at home.
YES 1	NO 0	I am worried about falling.
YES 1	NO 0	I need to push with my hands to stand up from a chair.
YES 1	NO 0	I have some trouble stepping up onto a curb.
YES 1	NO 0	I often have to rush to the toilet.
YES 1	NO 0	I have lost some feeling in my feet.
YES 1	NO 0	I take medicine that sometimes makes me feel light-headed or more tired than usual.
YES 1	NO 0	I take medicine to help me sleep or improve my mood.
YES 1	NO 0	I often feel sad or depressed.

TOTAL Add up the number of points for each "yes" answer. If you scored 4 points or more, you may be at increased risk for a fall. Discuss your fall prevention plan with your doctor.

• **Talk to your family members or others close to you.** Ask them to help you take simple steps to stay safe. An unsafe home increases the risk for falling for everyone, from the very young to the very old.

• **Follow this safe-at-home checklist:**

- Remove throw rugs, cords, and small objects.
- Tack down or tape carpet edges.
- Remove clutter.
- Clear pathways of furniture and electrical cords.
- Put handrails in the bathroom for bath, shower, and toilet use.
- Use non-slip mats in the bathtub and shower.
- Put a list of important phone numbers in large print near the phone.
- Keep a cell or portable phone in reach.
- Limit reaching and bending by storing commonly used items on lower shelves.



- Use night lights.
- Ensure good lighting in hallways and stairwells.
- Avoid using step stools.

• **Take a fall prevention class.** To sign up, visit livingwell.utah.gov or call 888-222-2542.

Instructions from my doctor

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