

Check Your Risk for Falling

Please circle "Yes" or "No" for each statement below.

I have fallen in the past year. Yes (2) | No (0) *People who have fallen once are likely to fall again.*

I use or have been advised to use a cane or walker to get around safely. Yes (2) | No (0) *People who have been advised to use a cane or walker may already be more likely to fall.*

Sometimes I feel unsteady when I am walking. Yes (1) | No (0) *Unsteadiness or needing support while walking are signs of poor balance.*

I steady myself by holding onto furniture when walking at home. Yes (1) | No (0) *This is also a sign of poor balance.*

I am worried about falling. Yes (1) | No (0) *People who are worried about falling are more likely to fall.*

I need to push with my hands to stand up from a chair. Yes (1) | No (0) *This is a sign of weak leg muscles, a major reason for falling.*

I have some trouble stepping up onto a curb. Yes (1) | No (0) *This is also a sign of weak leg muscles.*

I often have to rush to the toilet. Yes (1) | No (0) *Rushing to the bathroom, especially at night, increases your chance of falling.*

I have lost some feeling in my feet. Yes (1) | No (0) *Numbness in your feet can cause stumbles and lead to falls.*

I take medicine that sometimes makes me feel light-headed or more tired than usual. Yes (1) | No (0) *Side effects from medicines can sometimes increase your chance of falling.*

I take medicine to help me sleep or improve my mood. Yes (1) | No (0) *These medicines can sometimes increase your chance of falling.*

I often feel sad or depressed. Yes (1) | No (0) *Symptoms of depression, such as not feeling well or feeling slowed down, are linked to falls.*

Add up the number of points for each "yes" answer. If you scored 4 points or more, you may be at risk for falling. Discuss this brochure with your doctor.

Total _____

Home Modification List (continued)

Floors and Walkways

- Arrange furniture so that you have plenty of room to walk without obstacles.
- Keep walkways free of cords, furniture, clutter and other obstacles.
- Remove throw rugs or secure them with double-stick tape or tacks.
- If you have hardwood floors, consider carpets. Hardwood floors have a greater risk of fractures.
- Use non-slip or non-skid floor wax—or none at all.
- Don't "leave it for later." Take care of spills and dropped objects promptly.



Fall Prevention Resources
doh.wa.gov



Falls Prevention for Older Adults
ncoa.org



Facts About Falls | Older Adult Fall Prevention
cdc.gov



To view our senior health classes, scan the QR code or visit:
overlakehospital.org/senior-health-classes

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STAY INDEPENDENT AND PREVENT FALLS

MAINTAIN YOUR HEALTHY LIFESTYLE



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Falls pose a major threat to the health and independence of older adults, those who are 65 and older. Each year in the United States, nearly one-third of older adults experience a fall. About one out of ten falls among older adults result in serious injury, such as a hip fracture or head injury that require hospitalization. Falls are the leading cause of injury deaths among older adults.

As you age, your risk for falls increases, however, falls are not a normal part of aging.

Many falls can be prevented. By making some simple changes, you can lower your chances of falling.

Five things YOU can do to prevent falls:

1. Keep moving.
2. Talk to your healthcare provider.
3. Get your vision and hearing checked annually and eat a nutritious diet.
4. Talk to your family.
5. Keep your home safe.

Ways to Reduce Your Risk

Keep moving. Find an exercise class near you and work on improving balance and strength. Moderate daily exercise will improve your muscle tone and reduce your risk of falling.

Talk to your healthcare provider. Tell them about any recent falls and review your medication. Some medications, or combinations of medicines, can make you sleepy or dizzy, and increase your risk of falling.

Get your vision and hearing checked annually and eat a nutritious diet. Eye disease and normal aging can make it difficult to judge distances or see hazards.

Talk to your family. Enlist their help to stay safe. Falls are not just an issue for older adults.

Keep your home safe. Complete the home modification checklist to identify common household hazards.

Review your medications with your doctor. Keep an updated list of your medications with you. Take your medication as prescribed. Report adverse reactions to your doctor.



Home Modification List:

Approximately 50-75% of falls are due to home hazards, so it's crucial to recognize the risks before they lead to a fall. This checklist will help you identify fixes to common hazards.

Lighting

- Well lit stairways, halls and walkways.
- At least 60-70 watt light bulbs in all rooms.
- Lamp/light switches in easy reach.

Steps and Stairways

- Handrails on both sides of steps/stairways.
- Loose carpet secured.
- Stairs well lit with switches at top and bottom.
- Stairs free of clutter.
- Visual cues on step edges.

Bathroom

- Nonskid rug on the floor at shower or tub edge.
- Wall bar installed shower/tub and next to toilet.

Shoes

- Wear low heeled, non-skid, lightweight and supportive shoes, which are firmly fastened.

Living Room

- Make sure your furniture is easy for you to get in and out of (knee height or higher is easiest).
- Keep a phone on a low table within reach of the floor.
- Arrange the room to create clear walking spaces.

Kitchen

- Keep regularly used items within comfortable reach.
- Never climb on chairs—only use step-stools with a handlebar on the back.

Yards, Outdoor Stairs, and Walkways

- Keep outdoor stairs and walkways well-lit and free of breaks and cracks.
- Make sure there are handrails on both sides of stairs.
- Look out for uneven ground, stones, branches, pets, garden hoses or tools.
- Factor in the weather—any type of wet or icy walkways can cause slips.