

## How to Prevent Falls

As we age, our chances of falling increase. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, more than 1 in 4 adults ages 65 and older fall every year. Injuries can be serious, making it harder for some people to stay independent. But if you take the right steps, you can help prevent falls from happening.

### Are You at Risk?

If you check one or more of the boxes below, you could be at risk for falling.

- I am weak in the lower body
- I have foot pain
- My doctor said I don't get enough vitamin D
- I have a hard time with walking or balance
- I take certain medications, like tranquilizers, sedatives or antidepressants
- I have fall hazards in my home
- I have osteoporosis



### About Osteoporosis

Osteoporosis can make bones weak and brittle, which means bones can break more easily. Weak bones also mean falling is more likely and more dangerous. The most common osteoporosis-related injuries are to the hip, wrist and spine.

#### How to Prevent Osteoporosis

There are some things you can do now to try to prevent osteoporosis. The first step is to ask your doctor about testing the strength of your bones. Depending on the results, your doctor may give you medication.

You can also eat a healthy diet that includes foods high in calcium, like low-fat dairy products, dark green leafy vegetables, canned salmon or sardines with bones, and orange juice. And exercise is a great complement to a healthy diet! Walking, or even dancing, for 30 minutes a few times a week can make a big difference.



## Tips to Prevent Falls

- Wear low-heeled, supportive shoes
- Wear glasses, if needed, and clean them often
- Avoid walking in flip flops, slippers, socks or stockings
- Use a skid-proof mat in the bathtub or shower
- Install grab bars near the bathtub or shower and toilet
- Stairwells should have secure handrails and be well lit
- Increase lighting in dimly lit rooms
- Keep a flashlight and batteries by your bed
- Avoid step stools
- Keep your home at a nice temperature
- Keep floors and rooms clutter-free
- Floors should be smooth, but not slippery
- Put skid-proof backing on area rugs
- Use carpet runners on slick floors
- Limit alcohol consumption
- Get up slowly and take your time doing activities
- Keep a cordless phone or cellphone with you
- Use an emergency alert system
- Use a cane or walker
- Avoid slick flooring or recently polished floors
- Avoid pavement and asphalt

Remember, falling does not have to be a part of aging. Follow these tips, and talk with your doctor if you have issues with balance, walking or falls.

### Sources:

<https://www.cdc.gov/homeandrecreationsafety/falls/adultfalls.html>;

<https://www.webmd.com/osteoporosis/features/the-truth-about-vitamin-d-why-you-need-vitamin-d>;

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/osteoporosis/symptoms-causes/syc-20351968>