

Prevent Falls at Home

Here are some ideas to use in your home to help prevent falls.

Floors

- Keep cords, furniture, and small objects out of walkways and off of stairs. **Do not** put electric cords under rugs.
- Large area rugs should have non-slip backing. If not, use double-sided tape to keep the rug securely attached to the floor. **Do not** use throw rugs.
- Remove carpet that is torn or has turned-up edges. Use low-pile carpet or solid flooring.
- Use bright tape or paint to mark areas where the floor surface changes, such as from carpet to solid floors. It is easy to fall when you walk from one type of flooring to another.

Lighting

- Keep areas of your home well lit. Use night lights in bedrooms, bathrooms, and near stairs.
- Use switches that glow in the dark, so they can be seen more easily.
- Keep electrical cords and small things out of your path.

Stairs

- Place handrails on both sides of your stairs to help with going up and down stairs. These handrails should extend beyond the top and bottom stair.
- Try not to carry anything, or carry as little as possible, when you use the stairs.
- Use good lighting on the stairs. Apply non-slip surfaces to wood stairs to prevent sliding.
- Use bright tape or paint on the edge of each step, so they are more easily seen.

Furniture

- Be careful when you sit down. Make sure the backs of your legs are touching the seat of the chair behind you.
- Use chairs and furniture that are stable for your size and weight. Choose chairs that have armrests.
- Get help to move furniture that may block your walking path.

Bathroom

- Use non-skid decals or a mat in the tub or shower.
- Install grab bars around the toilet and in the shower or bathtub. Towel bars will break if you use them as grab bars.
- Use a tub seat and an elevated toilet seat.
- Leave the bathroom door unlocked, so it can be opened if you fall.

Bedroom

- **Do not** wear long nightgowns or robes. These can cause you to trip.
- **Do not** wear loose shoes that cause you to shuffle your feet when you walk. Wear non-slip shoes or slippers that fit well and stay securely on your feet.
- Sleep in a bed that is easy to get into and out of.
- Place a lamp, telephone, and flashlight near your bed in case you need them during the night.

Kitchen

- Place items you use often at counter level or within easy reach.
- Use a sturdy step stool with a handrail to reach items on high shelves. **Do not** climb on the counter or use chairs.
- Wear non-slip shoes in the kitchen to avoid falls.

Outside your home

- Leave outside lights on at night to prevent falls if you are out after dark.
- Get help to repair cracks in your pavement and fill holes in your lawn.
- Get help to remove rocks, tools, snow, wet leaves, and ice on your outside walkways and stairs.

Other tips

- Be careful not to trip over pets. Be aware of where your pet is when you move around.
- Take your time. Do not rush to answer the phone or door, or to get up at night to use the bathroom.
- Always keep a telephone within reach. It may help to keep a mobile phone in your pocket or use an emergency alert necklace in case you fall and are unable to reach your phone.
- Consider using smart devices in your home that let you use your voice to call for help.
- If needed, use a cane or walker to give you support when you are walking.
- Ask for help when you get up if you feel shaky, weak, dizzy, or lightheaded.
- Talk to your health care provider about getting a fall risk assessment done. Providers such as physical therapists can do simple tests to measure your risk of falling.

Talk to your doctor or nurse if you have any questions or concerns.