



Be Safe: Prevent Falls

Healthy Living Message



What's Important to Know?

Falls are a leading cause of fractures, injuries, loss of function, and deaths among older adults. About half of all falls happen at home, and there are practical things you can do to reduce your risk of falling there. Engaging in regular physical activity, monitoring or avoiding certain medications, and getting your eyes checked may reduce your risk of falling. Other things you can do to prevent falls:

- Remove small throw rugs to prevent tripping and falling. If you choose to use them, anchor them with double-sided tape or anti-slip mats underneath.
- Install grab bars next to your toilet and in your tub or shower. Make sure you use non-slip mats in the bathtub and on shower floors.
- Use a walker or a cane for extra support.
- Improve the lighting in your home. As you get older, you need brighter lights to help you see well. Hang lightweight curtains or shades to reduce glare. Include night lights in areas you may walk at night.
- Wear shoes inside and outside the house. Avoid going barefoot or wearing slippers.
- Remove clutter (papers, books, clothes, shoes, etc.) from stairs and places where you walk so you will be less likely to trip. Install handrails and lights in all staircases.
- Keep items you often use in cabinets that you can reach without needing a step stool.
- Engage in physical activity such as balance training exercises or Tai Chi, to help reduce your risk of falling by increasing your strength and balance. Lack of physical activity leads to weakness and increases your chances of falling.

Want to Know More?

If you want to learn more about how to prevent falls, talk with your VA health care team. They can also help if you have questions about making a healthy living change.

You can find additional information and resources at VA's Prevention website using the QR code above or the link below:

https://www.prevention.va.gov/Healthy_Living/Be_Safe_Prevent_Falls.asp

