

## Fall Prevention



Falls are unintentional incidents that cause people to lose their balance and strike their bodies on the ground or against surfaces or objects. Older adults are more prone to falls due to age-related changes in the body. Falls can also be caused by health conditions or the side effects of medications. A fall can put a person at risk of further injury, so to prevent falls, it is important to consider the following strategies:

### Visit your doctor

- **Medications:** Together with your doctor you can identify if you are having any side effects because of the medications you are using. Some of these effects may cause you to lose your balance, have dizziness or blurred vision, which may make you more prone to falls. If you are experiencing side effects, make a list of all the prescription and over-the-counter medications you are using so that your doctor can review and tell you if any need to be substituted or stopped.
- **Previous falls:** Talk to your doctor if you have had previous falls. Detail the falls and include where and how they happened. Your doctor will be able to offer strategies to prevent future falls.
- **Medical conditions:** Discuss with your doctor any risk factors or conditions that affect you that may increase your risk of falling. Notify your doctor about how you feel when you walk, if you experience dizziness, pain, or other discomfort.

### Physical activity

- Engage in physical activities, such as walking, water exercises or yoga, among others. These can help improve strength, balance, and muscle tone, which is beneficial in preventing falls. Check with your doctor before starting any type of physical activity.
- There may be a fear of falling, so your doctor may recommend carefully monitored exercise programs or physiotherapy to keep you moving.



### Wear comfortable shoes



- Proper footwear can reduce the risk of a fall. Wear flat, sturdy, slip-resistant shoes. Avoid high heels, slippers and shoes with slippery soles.

### Home care

- **Remove hazards from the home:** Remove loose wires, misplaced rugs, boxes, and objects on the floor, and don't have small pets that can trip you. Maintain good lighting in the home, especially on the path from the bedroom to the bathroom.
- **Safe bathroom:** Place handrails in the bathtub, shower and next to the toilet. You could also place a non-slip mat in the bath or shower to prevent accidents, falls or slipping.
- **Keep the house bright:** Place lights in all common areas of the home such as the bedroom, bathroom, and hallways. Have a lamp near your bed that allows you to turn it on at night in case you must get up. Turn on the lights when you enter your home, when going up or down stairs, and every time you walk inside the house. Don't stay in the dark to avoid falls when tripping over objects you can't see.



### Assistance devices

For better stability, your doctor may recommend that you use the following assistive devices:

- Cane or walker
- Handrails on both sides of stairs
- Raised toilet seat
- Grab bars in the shower or bathtub
- Plastic seat for use in a shower or bathtub



### Social and Emocional Aspects

For recommendations, tools and resources on how you and your family can cope with the emotional and physical concerns that arise during and after your treatment, please visit your primary care physician or call the following phone lines:

#### Medical Advice Line

1-844-347-7801

**TTY/TDD** 1-844-347-7804

#### APS Health

787-641-9133

#### References:

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/healthy-aging/in-depth/fall-prevention/art-20047358>

<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000052.htm>

Prepared by Licensed Health Educators.

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