

The Risk of Senior Falls

Are you at a Health Risk?

- Taking multiple medications
(Such as medications for high blood pressure, cardiac, diabetes, etc.)
- Over the age of 65 years old
- A previous fall
- Vision problems
- Lack of exercise



Each year, 1 in every 3 adults, ages 65 or older falls. 2 million are treated in emergency departments for fall related injuries.

Environmental Risks

- **Floors:** uneven surfaces, loose cords/wires; throw rugs; poor lighting; no hand rails; **Walking** around in socks or slippers; wet floors; cluttered floors
- **Kitchen:** frequently used items in high cabinets; unsecure step stool
- **Bathroom:** slick, slippery floors; no hand rails; high tubs
- **Bedroom:** cluttered floors; no night lighting; high bed
- **Get up slowly** after lying or sitting down.

Low Risk Abilities

- Steady standing on one leg for at least five seconds
- Steady getting up from a chair
- Sits down in a chair without plopping

While Walking

- Walk path is straight
- Turn steadily
- Swing foot always passes the stable foot by at least a foot length (normal step length)
- Heal of the swing foot always hits the floor first (heel-toe sequencing)

Falls are not an inevitable part of aging. In fact, many falls can be prevented.

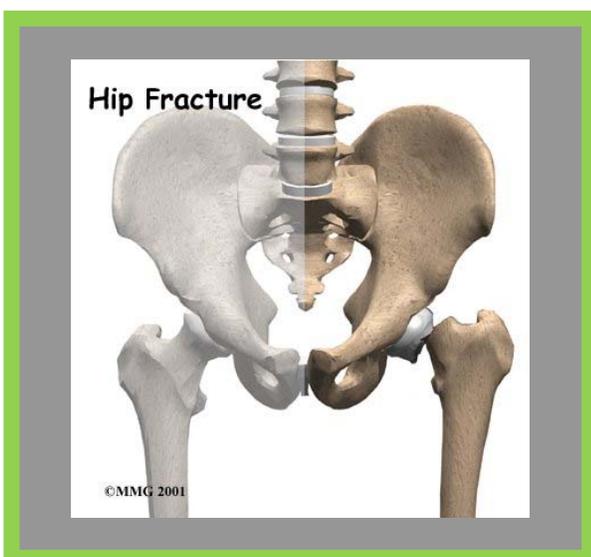
Talk to your healthcare provider.

Falls are the leading cause of injury death in those 65 or older.

Preventing Senior Falls

Prevention Tips

- **Get some exercise.** Lack of exercise can lead to weak legs and this increase the chances of falling. Exercise programs like Yoga and Tai Chi can increase strength and improve balance, making falls much less likely.
- **Be mindful of medications.** Some medications –or combinations of medications – can have side effects like dizziness or drowsiness. This can make falling more likely. Having a doctor or pharmacist review all medications can help reduce the chance of risky side effects and drug interactions.
- **Strength/Balance.** Exercise should focus on leg strength and improving balance.
- **Home Safety.**
 - **Floors:** Use double-sided tape on throw rugs. Coil telephone and electrical wires next to the wall. Fix loose or uneven steps. Make sure your stairway is lighted; handrails are secure and that they're on both sides, the entire length of the stairs.
 - **Kitchen:** Keep items in lower, easy-to-reach shelves or cabinets. If you have a stepstool, make sure it's solid.
 - **Bathroom:** Put a non-slip mat or self-stick strips on your shower or tub floor. If you need it, install grab bars near the toilet and in the shower.
 - **Bedroom:** Make sure the path to your bed is clutter free. Install a night-light in your room.
 - Wear shoes inside for better support and grip. **Avoid slippers.**
 - **Get up slowly** after lying or sitting down.
- **Get adequate calcium and Vitamin D** – from food and/or from supplements. Get screened and, if needed, treated for osteoporosis.



One Slip and It's a Hip!

Falls cause 90% of all broken hips.

Only half who break their hip will get around like they used to.

Falls and fall injuries are more common than strokes and can be just as serious in their consequences.

Falls and fall injuries are the most preventable cause of needing nursing home placement.