

Fall prevention

People fall at every age. However, as we age, we become more concerned about falling. A fall at an older age can have serious consequences to our health and independence.

Path to improved safety

Talk with your doctor to see if you are at a higher risk of falling. In addition to age, certain medical conditions put you at risk, including arthritis, cataracts, and hip problems. Diseases, such as Parkinson's disease and [multiple sclerosis](#) (MS), also can affect your mobility and increase your fall risk. Other ways to reduce your risks include:

- Install good lighting in your home. A well-lit home will help you avoid tripping over objects that are not easy to see. Make sure your bedroom, hallways, stairs, and bathrooms are well lit.
- Fasten rugs firmly to the floor. Add nonskid backing so it doesn't move and tack down loose ends and corners.
- Install hand rails in your bathroom for the bath, shower, and toilet. Add them to both sides of your stairs if you don't already have them.
- Keep electrical cords away from high-traffic areas in your house.
- Store your most-used kitchen objects in easy-to-reach areas. This eliminates the need to reach high, bend over, or climb on a stool.
- Wear shoes with firm, nonskid soles. Avoid wearing loose-fitting shoes and slippers.
- Exercise regularly to keep your body, muscles, and bones healthy and strong.
- Get regular eye exams.
- Keep your feet healthy, especially if you have diabetes.
- Be aware of medicine side effects. Some medicines can cause dizziness.
- Use a cane or walker if your doctor recommends it.
- Don't smoke, and limit alcohol to no more than 2 drinks per day.
- Ease in and out of bed. Sit on the side of the bed for a few minutes with your feet on the ground before you stand. Getting up too quickly can cause dizziness.
- Don't go outside in icy conditions. If you must go out, plan ahead by having someone walk with you, treat the conditions with anti-icing materials, or have your walkways shoveled.

Things to consider

- **Broken bones.** Our bones become more brittle as we age. Broken bones take longer to heal as we age, keeping you restricted to bed or a wheelchair. Other breaks, such as [hip fractures](#) in the elderly, have been linked to death in as soon as 6 months after the fall. Additionally, you lose your ability to be independent when you can't walk.
- **Traumatic brain injury (TBI).** This is a serious injury to your brain. It can happen if a fall causes you to hit your head (hard) on an object or on the floor.
- **Cognitive decline.** Alzheimer's disease and other conditions that affect a person's cognitive ability can increase the risk of falls.