

Use this checklist to minimize fall risk

Outside your home

- ✓ Paint the edges of outdoor steps and any steps that are especially narrow or are higher or lower than the rest.
- ✓ Paint outside stairs with a mixture of sand and paint for better traction. Keep outdoor walkways clear and well-lit.
- ✓ Clear snow and ice from entrances and sidewalks.

Inside your home

- ✓ Remove all extraneous clutter in your house.
- ✓ Keep telephone and electrical cords out of pathways.
- ✓ Tack rugs and glue vinyl flooring so they lie flat. Remove or replace rugs or runners that tend to slip, or attach nonslip backing.
- ✓ Ensure that carpets are firmly attached to the stairs.
- ✓ Do not stand on a chair to reach things. Store frequently used objects where you can reach them easily.

Keep a well-lit home

- ✓ Have a lamp or light switch that you can easily reach without getting out of bed.
- ✓ Use night lights in the bedroom, bathroom and hallways.
- ✓ Keep a flashlight handy.
- ✓ Have light switches at both ends of stairs and halls. Install handrails on both sides of stairs.
- ✓ Turn on the lights when you go into the house at night.

Bathroom tips

- ✓ Add grab bars in shower, tub and toilet areas.
- ✓ Use nonslip adhesive strips or a mat in shower or tub.
- ✓ Consider sitting on a bench or stool in the shower.
- ✓ Consider using an elevated toilet seat.

Use care walking

- ✓ Use helping devices, such as canes, as directed by your healthcare provider.
- ✓ Wear nonslip, low-heeled shoes or slippers that fit snugly. Avoid walking around in stocking feet.

And don't forget...

- ✓ Review medications with your doctor or pharmacist. Some drugs, including over-the-counter drugs, can make you drowsy, dizzy and unsteady.
- ✓ Discuss safe amounts of alcohol intake with your physician.
- ✓ Have your hearing and eyesight tested. Inner ear problems can affect balance. Vision problems make it difficult to see potential hazards.
- ✓ Exercise regularly to improve muscle flexibility, strength, and balance. Talk to your healthcare professional about exercise programs that are right for you.
- ✓ If you feel dizzy or lightheaded, sit down or stay seated until your head clears. Stand up slowly to avoid unsteadiness.