



## Fall Prevention Network

*Slips and Falls Can Be Prevented*

More than one third of adults 65 and older fall each year in the United States. Among older adults, falls are the leading cause of injury deaths, as well as the most common cause of nonfatal injuries and hospital admissions for trauma.

### Take the First Steps to Fall Prevention:

- Exercise regularly to increase strength and improve balance
- Have a doctor or pharmacist review all medicines
- Have an eye exam at least once a year
- Reduce hazards in the home that could lead to falls

**IS THERE A KILLER  
LURKING IN YOUR  
HOUSE?**



**SLIPS AND FALLS CAN BE PREVENTED**

*An example of our marketing campaign*

Many slips and falls are due to hazards that are easy to overlook but also easy to fix. By making some simple changes, shown here, you can lower your chances of falling.

### Four Steps to Prevent Falls:

#### Step 1. Begin a regular exercise program.

Exercise is one of the most important ways to reduce your chances of falling. It makes you stronger and helps you feel better. Exercises that improve balance and coordination are the most helpful. Talk to your healthcare provider before starting an exercise program.

#### Step 2. Have your health care provider review your medicines.

Have your doctor or pharmacist review all the medicines you take, even over-the-counter medicines. Some medicines, or combinations of medicines, can make you sleepy or dizzy and might cause you to fall.

#### Step 3. Have your vision checked.

Have your eyes checked by an eye doctor at least once a year. You may be wearing the wrong glasses or have a condition like glaucoma or cataracts that limits your vision. Poor vision can increase your chances of falling.

#### Step 4. Make your home safer.

About half of all falls happen at home, and many could have been easily prevented. Remove things you can trip over, like papers, books, clothes, cords and shoes.

*See the home safety checklist on the back*

# Your Home Safety Checklist:

## Floors:

- Move furniture so that your path is clear.
- Remove throw rugs or use double-sided tape or a non-slip backing so rugs won't slip.
- Keep things off the floor and stairs – such as papers, books, towels, shoes, magazines, boxes and blankets.
- Coil or tape telephone and electrical cords next to the wall so you can't trip over them.

## Inside Stairs and Outdoor Steps:

- Always keep objects off stairs and fix loose or uneven steps.
- Make sure the carpet is firmly attached on stairs, or attach non-slip rubber treads to uncarpeted stairs.
- Tighten loose handrails or put in new ones. Install handrails on both sides of the stairs, which are as long as the stairs.
- Be sure you have overhead lighting on stairs. Have an electrician put in a light switch at the top and bottom of the stairs.
- Have a friend or family member change burned out lightbulbs.

## Kitchen and Laundry:

- Buy small-sized products, such as laundry soap and milk.
- Keep items you use often within easy reach.
- Never use a chair as a step stool.
- If you do use a step stool, use one with a bar to hold on to.

## Bedrooms:

- Place a lamp close to the bed where it's easy to reach.
- Install a night-light so that you can see where you're walking. Many night-lights go on by themselves after dark. You can also install light switches or switchplates that glow.
- Add lighting to dark areas and hang lightweight curtains or shades on windows to reduce glare.

## Bathrooms:

- Put a non-slip rubber mat or self-stick strips on the floor of the tub or shower.
- Install sturdy grab bars for the tub or shower and next to the toilet.

## Other Safety Tips:

- Wear shoes both inside and outside the house. Avoid going barefoot or wearing slippers.
- Put a phone near the floor in case you fall and can't get up. Keep emergency numbers in large print near each phone.
- Consider wearing an alarm device or whistle that will summon help in case you fall and can't get up.

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