



Prevent Falls at Home

A home checklist and helpful hints

Most falls happen at home. They can be scary and dangerous.

Falls can be prevented. Use this handout to learn how to prevent falls and stay safe.

People of all ages fall at home. Falls can make you upset and they can cause serious injury. After a fall, you may not feel safe doing your normal activities.

To find out if you are at risk for falling, check the statements below that are true for you:

- I have fallen in the past.
- I take medicines that make me dizzy or lightheaded.
- I have fainted.
- I often feel weak.
- I am in pain.
- I sometimes lose my balance.
- I have memory problems.
- I am living in a new environment.
- I drink alcohol.
- I use the bathroom often.
- I have trouble getting up from my chair or the toilet.
- I have a hard time moving around.
- My shoes are not comfortable or they are loose.
- My shoes are slippery on the bottom.

If you checked ANY of these boxes, you are at risk for falling and hurting yourself. Read the next few pages for helpful hints to prevent falling in your home.

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Helpful Hints:

- **Get rid of throw rugs.**
- **Add grab bars and handrails.**
- **Use nightlights.**
- **Keep pathways clear.**
- **Clean up spills.**
- **Wear shoes that fit well and have non-slip soles.**

Check Your Home

Bathroom

- Do you have slippery tiles or a bath mat that slides?
- Do you have trouble getting in and out of the bathtub or shower?
- Do you have a low toilet seat?

What you can do:

- Install grab bars.
- Use non-slip bath mats.
- Use a raised toilet seat.

Floors

- Are your floors cluttered?
- Do you use throw rugs?
- Do you have worn or frayed carpets?
- Are there electrical cords near where you walk?

What you can do:

- Make a clear, safe pathway.
- Remove throw rugs.
- Repair or replace worn carpet.
- Keep cords away from walkways.

Stairs

- Do you have objects on the stairs?
- Do you have sturdy handrails?
- Do you have lighting in the stairway?

What you can do:

- Keep stairways clear.
- Install handrails.
- Install lighting on stairways.

Lighting

- Is it too dark at night?
- Is your house dim?

What you can do:

- Use nightlights in all rooms and hallways.
- Use 100 to 200 watt bulbs.

Kitchen

- Are dishes in high cabinets?
- Are hot pads and oven mitts in drawers?
- Do you have slippery floors?

What you can do:

- Put dishes where they are easy to reach.
- Put hot pads and oven mitts where they are easy to reach.
- Clean up spills right away.

Outside

- Do you have gardening equipment lying around?
- Are your sidewalks uneven?
- Do you have damaged steps?
- Do you need to do projects that require a ladder?

What you can do:

- Remove items like hoses and garden tools from pathways.
- Repair sidewalks and steps.
- Install handrails.
- Ask someone to help with projects that require a ladder.

If You Fall At Home

- Do not panic.
- Make sure you are OK before you try to get up.
- Get up slowly. Hold onto stable furniture for support.
- If you need to, slide or crawl to your phone or front door.
- Call your emergency number for help.
- Try to make yourself comfortable until help arrives.

Be Prepared:

- **Have an emergency plan.**
- **Think about wearing a Lifeline or a panic button around your neck.**
- **Think about carrying a cellular or cordless phone.**
- **Get to know your neighbors. They can help you if you fall.**
- **Help may be available at low or no cost. Call the King County Fall Prevention Program or your public health department.**

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your senior center or health care provider to learn more about how you can protect yourself and make your home safer. Take the time to look up the phone numbers of some of these community resources and write them down.

Fire Department: _____

Senior Center: _____

Home Health Nurse: _____

Physical Therapist: _____

Your Health Care Provider: Name: _____

Phone: _____

Friend: Name and Phone: _____

Neighbor: Name and Phone: _____

In the Seattle Area:

Emergency: **9-1-1**

King County Fall Prevention Program: 206-296-0202

Senior Services: 206-448-3110

..... 800-972-9990

..... TTY: 206-448-5025

American Red Cross Lifeline: 800-959-6989

Websites:

Senior Services: www.seniorservices.org

One Step Ahead Fall Prevention Program
..... www.kingcounty.gov/healthservices/health/ems/community/falls.aspx

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