

Common Causes of Falls

Your brain, muscles and bones work together to maintain your body's balance and to keep you from falling;

- whether you are walking,
- rising from a chair,
- or climbing stairs.

The brain, muscles and bones also let you navigate sloping or uneven surfaces.

You are more likely to fall as you get older because as you age,

- your sense of balance declines,
- your muscles weaken and,
- your reaction time slows.

That may make it harder for you to avoid something in your path or adjust to a sudden change in the surface on which you are walking.

You are also more likely to fall due to new medications such as pain relievers, recent procedures or surgeries.

Specific Causes of Falls

- Weakness, gait or balance disorders
- Medications and /or alcohol
- Chronic illness
- Visual and/or hearing disorders
- Environmental hazards
- Central nervous system disorders, syncope, vertigo and epilepsy
- Post-op orthopedics, joint pain and/or instability
- Delirium

Fall Prevention While in the Hospital

- Use the call bell if you need help
- Inform staff if you feel dizzy, weak or lightheaded
- Ask for assistance getting out of bed if these conditions exist
- Use call light in the bathroom, shower or bedside if you need assistance ambulating
- Use proper footwear provided in the hospital – nonskid socks
- Move slowly prior to standing or ambulating to minimize dizziness related to orthostatic hypotension (drop in blood pressure)

- Do not lean over bedside tables or any furniture with wheels or mobile bases
- Grab bars if necessary

Home Safety Checklist



Your blood pressure takes time to adjust when you sit up.

It may be too low if you get up quickly.

This can make you dizzy, and you might lose your balance and fall.

- If you feel dizzy, slide down and sit on the floor.
- Use a cane or walker to help you keep your balance on uneven ground or slippery surfaces.
- Fasten area rugs firmly to the floor or have non-slip backing installed.
- Wear sturdy, low-heeled shoes with wide, non-slip soles.
- Re-arrange furniture to keep electrical cords and furniture out of the walking paths
- Keep open areas free of clutter.
- Provide bright lights so you can avoid tripping over objects that aren't easy to see.
- Make sure you can reach the phone from your bed
- Sleep on a low bed easy to get in and out of.
- If you have stairs: provide enough light to see each stair at the top and bottom landings.
- Keep flashlights nearby in case of a power outage.
- When you get out of bed, sit on the side of the bed for a few minutes before standing up.



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