

## Self-Assess Your Fall Risk

Please circle "Yes" or "No" for each statement below.			Why it matters
Yes (2)	No (0)	I have fallen in the past year.	People who have fallen once are likely to fall again.
Yes (2)	No (0)	I use or have been advised to use a cane or walker to get around safely.	People who have been advised to use a cane or walker may already be more likely to fall.
Yes (1)	No (0)	Sometimes I feel unsteady when I am walking.	Unsteadiness or needing support while walking are signs of poor balance.
Yes (1)	No (0)	I steady myself by holding onto furniture when walking at home.	This is also a sign of poor balance.
Yes (1)	No (0)	I am worried about falling.	People who are worried about falling are more likely to fall.
Yes (1)	No (0)	I need to push with my hands to stand up from a chair.	This is a sign of weak leg muscles, a major reason for falling.
Yes (1)	No (0)	I have some trouble stepping up onto a curb.	This is also a sign of weak leg muscles.
Yes (1)	No (0)	I often have to rush to the toilet.	Rushing to the bathroom, especially at night, increases your chance of falling.
Yes (1)	No (0)	I have lost some feeling in my feet.	Numbness in your feet can cause stumbles and lead to falls.
Yes (1)	No (0)	I take medicine that sometimes makes me feel lightheaded or more tired than usual.	Side effects from medicines can sometimes increase your chance of falling.
Yes (1)	No (0)	I take medicine to help me sleep or improve my mood.	These medicines can sometimes increase your chance of falling.
Yes (1)	No (0)	I often feel sad or depressed.	Symptoms of depression, such as not feeling well or feeling slowed down, are linked to
<b>Total _____</b> <b>Add up the number of points for each Yes answer.</b> <b>If you scored 4 points or more, you may be at risk of falling.</b>			

## Self-Assess Your Balance

Try this balance test at home. Stand with a counter in front of you, and have someone beside you for safety:

- Stand tall, wearing flat, closed shoes, with your arms folded across your chest. Keep your eyes open and focus on an object in front of you. Then raise one leg, bending the knee about 45 degrees and start a stopwatch.
- Remain on one leg, stopping the watch immediately if you uncross your arms, tilt sideways more than 45 degrees, move the leg you are standing on or touch the raised leg to the floor.
- Repeat with the other leg.
- Repeat steps 1 – 3 with your eyes closed.
- Compare your performance with eyes closed to the norms for various ages:
 

<b>20 to 49 years old</b> – 24 to 28 seconds	<b>70 to 79 years old</b> – 4 seconds
<b>50 to 59 years old</b> – 21 seconds	<b>80 and older</b> – most cannot do this test
<b>60 to 69 years old</b> – 10 seconds	

## Tips for Preventing Falls

### Vision

- Have regular eye exams
- Use night lights in bedrooms and bathrooms
- Add lighting along walkways
- Add tape strips to identify depth and length of stairs
- Use color and contrast to highlight surface type changes

### Environmental Hazards

- Install handrails on stairs and steps
- Secure rugs with nonskid tape, remove throw rugs
- Avoid stretching electrical cords across or down walkways
- Reduce clutter
- Install grab bars around bathtub and toilets
- Remove caster wheels from furniture
- Use sturdy step stools or a "Pick Stick" to reach items on high shelves
- Avoid floor polish or wax
- Use firm chairs with armrests for sitting and getting dressed

### Medications

- Be aware of medication side effects
- Regularly reassess need for medications with your physician
- Remove out-of-date medications from your medicine cabinet
- Limit alcohol intake and be aware of medication interactions

### Physical Exercise and Nutrition

- Exercise 15 to 30 minutes every other day to increase muscle and bone strength, balance and flexibility
- Find exercise you enjoy such as walking or swimming
- Join a gym, wellness program or senior center
- Wear proper-fitting shoes with low heels and rubber soles
- Prevent osteoporosis – which makes bones fracture more easily – by exercising regularly and getting plenty of calcium through milk, yogurt, cheese, fish, broccoli, collard and almonds
- Increase your vitamin D intake through exposure to sunlight, which increases your body's ability to absorb calcium, and consider taking daily vitamin supplements to help your body absorb calcium

