

Personal Risk Factors

Fall Prevention Checklist



Yes **No** 1) Have you fallen before or been injured because of a fall?

Yes **No** 2) Do you feel weaker than you used to or have less strength in your arms and legs?

Yes **No** 3) Have you stopped doing daily activities or avoided exercise because you're afraid of falling?

Yes **No** 4) Do you experience incontinence?

Yes **No** 5) Has your hand strength decreased?

Yes **No** 6) Has your eyesight diminished or do you have trouble seeing depth or seeing at night?

Yes **No** 7) Do you feel dizzy when you stand up?

Yes **No** 8) Have you experienced hearing loss?

Yes **No** 9) Do you have foot ulcers, bunions, hammertoes or callouses that hurt or cause you to adjust your steps?

Yes **No** 10) Do you feel unsteady on your feet or shuffle when you walk?

Recommendations for “Yes” Responses to the Assessment

- 1)** People who have fallen before are more likely to fall again. Think about the factors that led you to your last fall. Take action to reduce those factors. Consider using a personal emergency response service (such as Lifeline) to help you if you fall.
- 2)** Arm and leg weakness can make it harder for you to navigate your environment. You can build muscle strength with regular exercise. Join an exercise class or learn exercises that you can do at home.
- 3)** Fear of falling can be helpful if it causes you to take reasonable precautions, but it can be harmful when it causes you to avoid exercise and daily activities that keep you active, strong and healthy. Start slowly to build your confidence in exercise and daily activities. Consider chair exercises and progress to standing and then moving exercises. If you are afraid of exercising alone, consider joining a group class.
- 4)** Incontinence can increase your chance of falling if you are anxious and rush to get to the bathroom. Check with your doctor about incontinence treatments. If nighttime incontinence is an issue, consider getting a bedside commode. Make sure the path to your bathroom is well lit and free of clutter
- 5)** Decreased hand strength can put you at great risk for falling because you may have difficulty catching yourself or carrying objects safely. Avoid carrying things in your hands while walking. Put them in a pocket or purse instead. You may benefit from strength training for your hands. Talk to your health care provider about recommended exercises
- 6)** Problems with eyesight can make it difficult to see things you can trip over. Get your eyes checked by an optometrist to see if you need glasses or a new prescription. Place nightlights throughout your house. For depth perception problems, place tape or paint a line at the edge of stairs so you can see the edge when walking.
- 7)** Hearing is closely associated with balance. Get your hearing tested by your healthcare provider or by an audiologist. Wear a hearing aid if needed.
- 8)** Dizziness increases your chance of falling because it causes disorientation and even fainting. Dizziness may have many causes so you should ask your doctor to test you for postural hypotension. Take time to stabilize yourself before changing positions. Additionally, certain medication side effects can cause dizziness. Have a doctor or pharmacist review all the medications you are taking and make sure you understand how to take them correctly.
- 9)** Painful foot problems can cause you to walk slowly and differently, increasing your chance of falling. If you have reduced feeling in your feet, make sure to watch your step and be aware of foot placement. Attend a foot care clinic or ask your doctor to treat your feet problems.
- 10)** A strong stride and good balance are important to preventing falls. Consider using a cane or other assistive device to help you feel steadier on your feet. Your doctor can help you decide which device. You can also have your doctor to give you a balance assessment or recommend physical therapy. Carry a cordless or cellular phone with you so you don't have to rush to answer the phone and call for help if you do fall.

Adapted from the Minnesota Safety Council Fall Prevention Checklist-Personal Risk Factors and Hennepin County Community Health Department with permission.