



How to lower your risk of falling

Did you know that 50-75% of all falls occur in the home? Anyone can fall. However, there are ways to lower that risk. At greatest risk are those with poor vision and hearing, dizziness, muscle weakness and medical conditions, such as arthritis, seizures, depression or neuropathies.

You can decrease the risk of falling by safe-guarding your home.

Floors

- Avoid cleaning products or polishes that make the floor slippery
- Use nonskid rugs (apply adhesives or pad) or eliminate the rugs
- Clean up spills immediately
- Keep clutter off the floor
- Keep the walkway clear of extension and telephone cords
- Highlight uneven steps or surfaces

Lighting

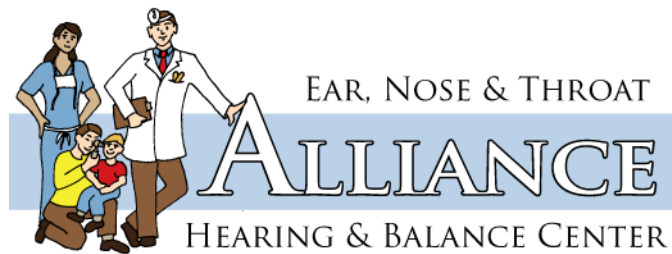
- Maintain well-lit hallways, stairways and closets
- Use night lights and have backup flashlights available
- Turn lights on if you get up in the middle of the night

Stairs, bathrooms, kitchens and furniture

- Use nonskid mats in the tub and shower
- Consider installing a grab bar in the shower or bathtub
- Use stairways with hand rails
- Organize storage areas to minimize reaching and bending
- Repair unstable chairs and tables
- Make sure stair treads, rugs and rails are secure

General

- Wear sturdy, rubber-soled, flat shoes
- Minimize alcoholic beverage intake
- Get up slowly from a sitting or lying position
- Use assistive devices, such as a walker or cane
- Consider physical therapy or exercise program to improve muscle strength
- Review medications that might contribute to falling with your primary care physician



Alert system

For patients who are living alone and are at risk of falling, we recommend an alert system to call for help. They typically have a small electrical device worn around the neck with a button to push for help. Most systems have a range of about 100 feet from your house.

There are several systems available locally. We recommend a comparison of installation and monthly fees.

- The widely advertised ADT system. www.ADT.com/Alarms
- Recommend calling your local Visiting Nurse Association for more information