

Tips on preventing falls at home

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Each year, millions of people are treated in emergency departments across the country for fall injuries. In fact, falling accounts for the most trauma center visits in all ages. A fall can put you at risk of serious injury and can be a sign of another health issue.

There are some simple tips to prevent falls, especially in your home.

Mayo Clinic emergency departments see patients every day who've been injured by falls.

"You can see things as simple as little cuts, and bumps and bruises, to broken bones to big head injuries, where you're bleeding into your brain. There's a variety of injuries that can occur," says Dr. Neha Raukar, a Mayo Clinic emergency medicine physician.

Many of those falls happen at home, and here are just a few easy things you can do to prevent them. It starts with reviewing any medications you're taking with your health care team.

"Every time somebody gets a medication, try to know what the [side effects](#) are, especially if they affect your balance or your ability to be awake," says Dr. Raukar.

Be informed about any [medical conditions](#) that could make you more prone to falls.

"Things like diabetes can cause neuropathy, where you can't really feel your feet. And so if you can't feel your feet and you're walking around, you can't really tell if your surface is uneven," says Dr. Raukar.

Other tips inside the house:

- Wear sensible shoes instead of slippery socks, [high heels](#) or flip-flops.
- Remove clutter and tripping hazards from high-traffic areas.
- Secure loose rugs with tape or nonslip backing.
- Keep your home brightly lit, and place a night light in bedrooms, bathrooms and hallways.

- Use an [assistive device](#), such as a walker or cane, if needed.
- If you have pets, be aware that they might be at your feet.

"We not infrequently see people who tripped over their dog or their cat as they're trying to scurry out of the way," says Dr. Raukar.

Stay physically active to avoid future falls. Gentle exercise, like walking or tai chi, improves strength, balance, coordination and flexibility. And report all your falls to your health care team, even if they seem trivial.

"Sometimes it means something more is happening that needs to be investigated," says Dr. Raukar.

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