

Avoiding Falls in Elders

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Are Falls in Your Future?

The first step in avoiding a fall is by discovering if falls are in your future. To find out, answer the quick 'Self-Assessment of Fall Risk' checklist found below. A 'Yes' response to one or more of the questions may indicate that you are at risk for a fall.

The best way to evaluate whether you are at risk is to visit your doctor, show your checklist and talk about your concerns. The checklist will help start the conversation with your doctor, and result in recommended interventions or strategies aimed at helping you to prevent falls.

A Self-Assessment of Fall Risk	
Questions	Explanation
Have you fallen one or more times in the past 3 months? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Many falls just 'don't happen' but are caused by underlying health conditions or problems.
Have you slipped or tripped 2 or more times in the past 3 months? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Frequent slipping or tripping may indicate a problem with walking or seeing correctly.

<p>Do you often feel unsteady or lose your balance?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p>	<p>Feeling unsteady or losing balance may be an early indication of a medical condition that requires looking into.</p>
<p>Do you have difficulty walking? Do you sometimes hold on to furniture or walls for support?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p>	<p>Difficulty with walking may indicate a problem with the nervous system or weak leg muscles.</p>
<p>Do you have difficulty getting up from a chair or sofa?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p>	<p>Difficulty with getting up may be a sign of weak muscles or other medical conditions.</p>
<p>Have you noticed a change in your vision?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p>	<p>Seeing correctly is important in avoiding trips and slips.</p>
<p>Do you take 5 or more medications daily?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p>	<p>Some medications can cause dizziness, drowsiness and balance problems.</p>

<p>Have you noticed a decline in your memory? Do you sometimes become easily confused?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p>	<p>Difficulty with memory or thinking correctly can interfere with safe mobility.</p>

Author of textbooks, professional training manuals and director of numerous research projects on fall prevention, Rein Tideiksaar Ph.D., PA-C has been active in this field for over 30 years, and has developed fall prevention programs in the community, assisted living, home care, acute care hospital, and nursing facility setting. He is the president of FallPrevent, LLC, Blackwood, NJ, a consulting company that provides educational, legal and marketing services related to fall prevention in the elderly. Dr Tideiksaar is a gerontologist (health care professional who specializes in working with elderly patients) and a geriatric physician's assistant. To learn more, check out the Dr's professional profile on LinkedIn: <http://www.linkedin.com/pub/dr-rein/6/759/592>. If you have any questions about preventing falls, please feel free to e-mail Dr. Tideiksaar at drrein@verizon.net.

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