

Falls



P. D. HINDUJA HOSPITAL
& MEDICAL RESEARCH CENTRE

Am I at risk of falling?

Your risk of falling increases as you grow older. That's because getting older can make it harder to walk steadily and keep your balance. Also, the effects of falls are more serious in older people.

Overall, 3 to 4 out of every 10 people over the age of 65 fall each year. Up to 75 percent of people who fracture a hip never recover to the point they were before they had their fracture. If you have fallen in the past, you are at higher risk of falling again.

Several things can increase your risk of a fall, including:

- Illness
- A change in the medicines you take
- An unsafe or unfamiliar setting (for example, a room with rugs or furniture that might trip you, or an area you don't know well)

How can my doctor help me to avoid falling?

Your doctor can talk to you about the following things:

- Past falls - It is important to tell your doctor about the times you have fallen or almost fallen. He or she can then suggest ways to prevent another fall.
- Your health conditions - Some health problems can put you at risk of falling. These include conditions that affect eyesight, hearing, muscle strength, or balance.
- The medicines you take - Certain medicines can increase the risk of falling. These include some medicines that are used for sleeping problems, anxiety, or depression. Adding new medicines, or changing doses of some medicines, can also affect your risk of falling.

The more your doctor knows about your situation, the better he or she will be able to help you. For example, if you fell because you have a condition that causes pain, your doctor might suggest treatments to deal with the pain. Or if one of your medicines is making you dizzy and more likely to fall, your doctor might switch you to a different medicine.

Is there anything I can do on my own?

Yes. To help keep from falling, you can:

- **Make your home safer** - To avoid falling at home, get rid of things that might make you trip or slip. This might include furniture, electrical cords, clutter, and loose rugs (figure 1). Keep your home well lit so that you can easily see where you are going. Avoid storing things in high places so you don't have to climb.
- **Wear sturdy shoes that fit well** - Wearing shoes with high heels or slippery soles, or shoes that are too loose can lead to falls. Walking around in bare feet, or only socks, can also increase your risk of falling.
- **Take Vitamin D pills** - Taking Vitamin D might lower the risk of falls in older people. This is because Vitamin D helps make bones and muscles stronger. Your doctor can help you decide how much Vitamin D to take.
- **Stay active** - Exercising on a regular basis can help lower your risk of falling. It is best to do a few different activities that help with both strength and balance. There are many kinds of exercises that can be safe for older people. These include walking, swimming, and yoga.

- **Use a cane, walker, and other safety devices -**
If your doctor recommends that you use a cane or walker, be sure that it's the right size and you know how to use it. There are other devices that might help you avoid falling, too. These include grab bars or a sturdy seat for the shower, and hand rails or treads for the stairs (to prevent slipping).

What should I do if I fall?

If you fall, see your doctor right away, even if you aren't hurt. Your doctor can try to figure out what caused you to fall, and how likely you are to fall again. He or she will conduct an exam and talk to you about your health problems, medicines, and activities. Then he or she can suggest things you can do to avoid falling again.

Many older people have a hard time recovering after a fall. Doing things to prevent falling can help you to protect your health and independence.
To know more about Falls in the elderly contact Geriatric Clinic (Clinic for the Elderly)

**The Geriatric Clinic is located at
3rd floor, Health Check Department,
Hinduja Clinic Building**

Timing - Thursday - 9.30 am to 11.30 am

**To schedule an appointment call
39818181 or 67668181**

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