

Check Your Risk for Falling

Please circle "Yes" or "No" for each statement below.

Why it matters

Yes (2)	No (0)	I have fallen in the past year.	People who have fallen once are likely to fall again.
Yes (2)	No (0)	I use or have been advised to use a cane or walker to get around safely.	People who have been advised to use a cane or walker may already be more likely to fall.
Yes (1)	No (0)	Sometimes I feel unsteady when I am walking.	Unsteadiness or needing support while walking are signs of poor balance.
Yes (1)	No (0)	I steady myself by holding onto furniture when walking at home.	This is also a sign of poor balance.
Yes (1)	No (0)	I am worried about falling.	People who are worried about falling are more likely to fall.
Yes (1)	No (0)	I need to push with my hands to stand up from a chair.	This is a sign of weak leg muscles, a major reason for falling.
Yes (1)	No (0)	I have some trouble stepping up onto a curb.	This is also a sign of weak leg muscles.
Yes (1)	No (0)	I often have to rush to the toilet.	Rushing to the bathroom, especially at night, increases your chance of falling.
Yes (1)	No (0)	I have lost some feeling in my feet.	Numbness in your feet can cause stumbles and lead to falls.
Yes (1)	No (0)	I take medicine that sometimes makes me feel light-headed or more tired than usual.	Side effects from medicines can sometimes increase your chance of falling.
Yes (1)	No (0)	I take medicine to help me sleep or improve my mood.	These medicines can sometimes increase your chance of falling.
Yes (1)	No (0)	I often feel sad or depressed.	Symptoms of depression, such as not feeling well or feeling slowed down, are linked to falls.

Total ____ Add up the number of points for each "yes" answer. If you scored 4 points or more, you may be at risk for falling.

If you are at risk of falling, please call the King County Emergency Medical Services fall prevention program for more information. You may qualify for a free in-home visit that provides the following:

- Education about staying safe in your home.
- A home safety walk through.
- Free in home safety devices to reduce your risk of falling.
- Information about other community resources to help you stay safe in your home.

The King County Emergency Medical Services fall prevention program is designed to help you stay independent and safe in your home. It is provided to you free of charge.

For more information call 206-263-8544.

Email: fallprevention.ems@kingcounty.gov



Shape Up! 50+ - For a Healthy Independent Lifestyle

The Shape Up program is designed for seniors 50+ to encourage physical activity to reduce falls.

The program provides a discount to older adults, 50+ years of age, to participate in group physical activity classes at seven community/senior centers in King County.

For more information: www.kingcounty.gov/shapeup

One Step Ahead

For a Healthy Independent Life



**King County
Emergency Medical Services**

401 - 5th Avenue, Suite 1200

Seattle, WA 98104

206-263-8544

Email: fallprevention.ems@kingcounty.gov

Website: www.kingcounty.gov/ems/falls



Public Health
Seattle & King County

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO REDUCE YOUR RISK FOR FALLS

- **Begin an exercise program to improve your strength and balance.**
- **Make your home safe.**
- **Ask your doctor to review your medications.**
- **Get annual eye check-ups and update your eyeglasses.**

EXERCISE

Keeping in good physical condition with moderate daily exercise will reduce your risk of falls. Regular exercise can:

- Improve your muscle tone, strength and endurance.
- Keep joints, tendons and ligaments more flexible for unrestrictive movement.
- Increase your sense of balance, agility and confidence.
- Increase your stamina and energy.

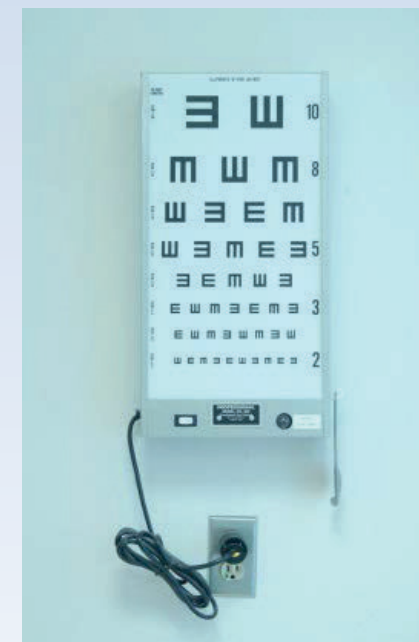


MEDICATION

- Review medications with your doctor.
- Keep a completed and updated medication list and always carry it with you.
- Take your medications as prescribed- don't skip or decrease the dose.
- Report adverse drug reactions to your doctor.
- Never use someone else's medication and discard old unused medications.

VISION

Have your vision checked annually. Eye disease or normal aging may make it difficult for older adults to read fine print, judge distance or identify objects clearly.



CHECK LIST FOR HOME SAFETY

Approximately 50-70% of falls are due to home hazards, so it's crucial to recognize the risks before they lead to a fall. This checklist will help you identify common hazards.

Lighting

- Keep stairways, halls and walkways well lit.
- Light bulbs should be at least 700 Lumens (60+ watt equivalent) in all rooms.
- Lamp/light switches are in easy reach.

Floors

- Keep walkways free of clutter.
- Remove throw rugs from walking pathways.
- Arrange furniture so you have plenty of room to walk.

Steps and Stairways

- All steps and stairways should have handrails on both sides.
- Secure loose carpet.
- Stairs should be well lit and have light switches at top and bottom.
- Keep stairs free of clutter.
- Add visual cues on step edges.

Bathroom

- Place a nonskid rug on the floor, to use at shower or tub edge.
- Install a wall bar inside your shower/tub and next to toilet.
- Use a shower chair and handheld showerhead.
- Place a non-skid bathmat or non-skid adhesive strips.

Living room/bedroom/kitchen

- Make sure that furniture is easy for you to get in and out of (knee height or higher is easiest).
- Arrange the room to create clear walking spaces.
- Keep regularly used items in easy reach.
- Keep a phone and light/flashlight on table within easy reach of your bed.
- Install a night light in your bedroom and bathroom.
- Keep bedding off the floor on all sides of the bed.

Shoes

- Wear low heeled, non-skid, lightweight and supportive shoes that are firmly fastened.