

VALLEY
MEDICAL
CENTER



Falling Prevention Workbook for Seniors

Plan Ahead, Keep Strong, Live Long

valleymed.org/trauma



VALLEY MEDICAL CENTER



Greetings,

Thank you for choosing Valley Medical Center for your medical care. You may be at a higher risk for slips, trips, stumbles, or falls at home. Falling is the #1 reason for injury we see here at Valley, especially in people over 60. It is never too early to start looking into preventing falls at home. Begin your fall-prevention plan by making an appointment with your primary doctor. Be prepared to answer questions such as:

- **What medications are you taking?** Make a list of your prescriptions, over-the-counter medications, and supplements and bring them to your primary doctor appointment. Your doctor can review your medications for side effects and interactions that may increase your risk of falling.
- **Have you fallen before?** Write down the details, including when, where and how you fell. Be prepared to discuss instances when you slipped tripped or stumbled but did not fall. Detailing events like these may help your doctor identify specific fall-prevention strategies.
- **Could your health conditions cause a fall?** Certain eye and ear disorders may increase your risk of falls. Be prepared to discuss your health conditions and how comfortable you are when you walk - for example, do you feel any dizziness, joint pain, shortness of breath, or numbness in your feet and legs when you walk?

Remember falling is not a normal part of aging. The enclosed documents have helpful preventable tips and home check off sheets for you to use. Make sure you have support and I encourage you to review the enclosed information with a friend or family member.

A great outreach resource in WA state is WA Community Living Connections at waccl.org. Please feel free to reach out to your primary doctor or myself with any questions or comments.

Thank you,

Katherine Bendickson RN, BSN
Trauma Program Coordinator
Valley Medical Center | Level III Trauma Center
Email: Trauma_Services@Valleymed.org

More information at VMC Trauma Webpage: valleymed.org/trauma

Always followup with your primary physician for specific medical advice especially before you implement anything new with preexisting conditions.

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The Falls Workbook and YOU

The aim of this workbook is to provide you with information, ideas, simple exercises, and contacts to help you prevent falls at home.

At Valley Medical Center we take falls and your medical care very seriously. As always follow up with your primary physician for specific medical advice before you implement anything new especially if you have any preexisting conditions.

Thank you for reading and stay safe!

-Trauma Services at Valley Medical Center

5 simple ways to prevent falls and maintain your independence when you age



1

Keep moving

Find an exercise class near you and work on improving balance and strength. Bring a friend!



2

Talk to your health care provider

Tell them about any recent falls and review your medication to make sure side effects aren't increasing your risk of falling.



3

Keep your home safe

Remove trip hazards like cords and furniture; increase lighting in dark spaces; and install railings on both sides of stairs and grab bars in areas like the bathroom.



4

Get your vision and hearing checked annually

Eye disease and normal aging can make it difficult to judge distances or see hazards.



5

Talk to your family and enlist their help to stay safe. Falls are not just an issue for older adults.

For more information about what YOU can do to prevent falls visit doh.wa.gov/findingourbalance.

Patient Education for VTE Prevention

CDC VIDEO:

<https://youtu.be/7IJfh00F7Z>



AM I AT RISK?

Risk factors may include:

- previous heart attack
- previous VTE
- family history of DVT
- increased age
- cancer
- heart disease
- obesity
- pregnancy
- hormone therapy
- birth control pills
- inactivity
- smoking
- infection
- sitting for a long time when traveling (longer than 6 to 8hrs)
- recent surgery
- extended bed rest
- surgery expected to last longer than one hour.



Blood clots in the veins of the body are known as **Venous Thromboembolism (VTE)**.

There are two main types:

1. **Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT)** is a blood clot that forms inside a deep vein.
2. **Pulmonary Embolus (PE)** occurs when a blood clot travels through the veins and blocks a major blood vessel leading to the lungs.

HOW DO I PREVENT VTE AFTER SURGERY?

- SCD pumps use air through special sleeves to squeeze the lower leg muscles to also improve blood flow.
- Your doctors may order special medications that help to prevent or treat blood clots.
- Early and frequent walking once your doctor approves.
- Simple leg exercises (*if approved by your doctor*):
 - While lying on your back, tighten your thighs and push the back of your knee to the bed (Hold for 10 seconds). Relax. Repeat frequently.
 - With your legs straight and relaxed, point toes toward head of bed, then toward the foot of the bed. Repeat frequently.
 - With legs relaxed on bed, move ankles in small circles. Repeat frequently.
- Know the signs of symptoms of PE and DVT.

PE signs and symptoms:

- Recent or sudden onset of shortness of breath
- Chest pain or discomfort, which worsens with a deep breath or coughing
- Coughing up blood
- Sudden collapse

If you have any of these symptoms you should seek medical help immediately.

DVT signs and symptoms:

- Recent swelling of the limb
- Unexplained pain in a limb
- Skin that may be warm/hot to the touch
- Redness of the skin

Signs and symptoms of DVT can be similar to other conditions, like a pulled muscle. Some people with DVT may also have no symptoms at all.

Any questions or concerns call your doctor or visit Valley Medical Center Emergency Department. Thank you.



Four Things You Can Do to Prevent Falls:

① **Speak up.**

Talk openly with your healthcare provider about fall risks and prevention. Ask your doctor or pharmacist to review your medicines.

② **Keep moving.**

Begin an exercise program to improve your leg strength and balance.

③ **Get an annual eye exam.**

Replace eyeglasses as needed.

④ **Make your home safer.**

Remove clutter and tripping hazards.

Learn More

Contact your local community or senior center for information on exercise, fall prevention programs, and options for improving home safety, or visit:

- go.usa.gov/xN9XA
- www.stopfalls.org



1 in 4 people 65 and older falls each year.

Stay Independent

Learn more about fall prevention.



For more information, visit www.cdc.gov/steady

This brochure was produced in collaboration with the following organizations: VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System, Geriatric Research Education & Clinical Center (GRECC), and the Fall Prevention Center of Excellence



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
National Center for Injury Prevention and Control

STEADI

Check Your Risk for Falling

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.	

This checklist was developed by the Greater Los Angeles VA Geriatric Research Education Clinical Center and affiliates and is a validated fall risk self-assessment tool (Rubenstein et al. J Safety Res; 2011; 42(6)493-499). Adapted with permission of the authors.

1 in 4 adults
now 65
will live to 90+

MyMobility Plan

What can you do to stay independent?

Many people make financial plans for retirement, but not everyone plans for other changes that may come with age. This includes changes in your mobility—your ability to get around.

It's not easy to talk about, but as we get older, physical changes can make it harder to get around and do things we want or need to do—like driving, shopping, or doing household chores.

There may be a time when you still need to get around, but can no longer drive.

You might not have mobility problems now, but you could in the future. You may even know others who already do—perhaps a parent, relative, friend, or neighbor. While it may not be possible to prevent all of these changes, there are actions you and your loved ones can take today, and as you age, to help keep you safe and independent tomorrow.

MySelf

A plan to stay independent



MyHome

A plan to stay safe at home



MyNeighborhood

A plan to stay mobile in my community



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
National Center for Injury Prevention and Control

Make a plan today.
Stay independent tomorrow.



Staying healthy and managing chronic conditions help maintain your mobility.

To start building your plan, complete the checklist below.

Get a physical checkup each year.

Some health issues may increase your risk of falling (such as leg weakness and balance problems).

Last Exam Date: _____

Next Exam Date: _____

Get a medical eye exam each year.

Eye problems can increase your risk of falling or being in a car crash.

Last Exam Date: _____

Next Exam Date: _____

Review all your medicines with a doctor or pharmacist.

Certain medicines can have side effects that can change your ability to drive, walk, or get around safely.

To learn more, go to:

<https://go.usa.gov/xPADs>

MyMobility Tip 

Good eyesight is about more than 20/20 vision. For example, you need to see well in the dark to drive safely at night.

Get a medical eye exam each year and address any issues.

Follow a regular activity program to increase your strength and balance.

Strength and balance activities, done at least 3 times a week, can reduce your risk of falling. Other activities, like walking, are good for you, but don't help prevent falls. Visit the National Institute on Aging's website for suggestions:

www.go4life.nia.nih.gov/exercises

Strength Activity		Balance Activity	
Exercise	Start Date	Exercise	Start Date
<i>Chair stand</i>	<i>Next Monday</i>	<i>Tai Chi</i>	<i>Next Monday</i>



To continue your plan, schedule a time to go through the following home safety checklist to help prevent falls.

Check the FLOORS in each room and reduce tripping hazards:

- Keep objects off the floor.
- Remove or tape down rugs.
- Coil or tape cords and wires next to the wall and out of the way.

Check the KITCHEN:

- Put often-used items within easy reach (about waist level).
- For items not within easy reach, always use a step stool and never use a chair.

Check the BEDROOMS:

- Use bright light bulbs.
- Place lamps close to the bed where they are within reach.
- Put in night-lights to be able to see a path in the dark. For areas that don't have electrical outlets, consider battery-operated lights.

Check inside and outside STAIRS and STEPS:

- Check for loose or uneven steps. Repair if needed.
- Make sure carpet is firmly attached to every step, or remove carpet and attach non-slip rubber treads.
- Check for loose or broken handrails. Repair if needed.
- Consider installing handrails on both sides of the stairs.
- Use bright overhead lighting at the top and bottom of the stairs.
- Consider putting light switches at both the top and bottom of the stairs.

Check the BATHROOMS:

- Put non-slip rubber mats or self-stick strips on the floor of the tub or shower.
- Consider installing grab bars for support getting in or out of the tub or shower, and up from the toilet.

MyMobility Tip

Falls are more likely when wearing inappropriate footwear, such as flip flops that don't cover the heel.

Wear safe shoes that fit well, have a firm heel to provide stability, and have a textured sole to prevent slipping.

For more home modification information and resources:
<https://go.usa.gov/xUEs3>



Finish your plan by filling out the table below.

Think of all the places you go and how you get there.

Then, consider how you would get to these same places if you couldn't use your current way.

Find transportation options in your ZIP code:

- Rides in Sight
1-855-607-4337
www.ridesinsight.org

Ride share services can help keep you connected to family and friends. Staying social helps maintain quality of life as you age.

Where do I go now? (Such as doctor, grocery store, or physical activity class)	How do I get there now? (Such as drive, get a ride, or use public transportation)	How will I get there in the future? (Such as bus, rideshare, or ride with a friend)
<i>Meet friends for lunch</i>	<i>Drive myself</i>	<i>Get a ride from a friend</i>

Consider a driver refresher course.

Some insurers give a discount on your car insurance for taking a course:

- AARP (888) 687-2277 or www.aarp.org
- AAA (800) 222-4357 or www.aaa.com

MyMobility Tip 

Practice safe behaviors, such as always wearing a seatbelt, as a driver or a passenger.

For more information visit:

www.cdc.gov/motorvehiclesafety/older_adult_drivers/mymobility

Fall Prevention and Recovery



Every 11 seconds, an older adult is treated in the emergency room for a fall; every 19 minutes, an older adult dies from a fall, and every year 25% of Americans aged 65+ take a fall, according to the National Council on Aging. These falls result in more than 2.8 million injuries treated in emergency departments every year, including more than 800,000 hospitalizations and 27,700 deaths.

While falls can cause mild to severe injuries, such as breaking a hip and head injuries, and can increase the risk of early death, many falls can be prevented.

Be aware of medical problems that increase risk of falling

- Problems with heart rate and/or arrhythmia
- Cognitive impairment—related to dementia rather than normal aging
- Incontinence—losing control of urinating (peeing) or bowels (pooping)
- Depression
- Foot problems

Medication management

- Have your healthcare provider or pharmacist review your medicines for fall-related side effects.
- Use only one pharmacy where a pharmacist can keep track of your medication list.
- Tell your provider if you have side effects.
- Ask your provider about taking vitamin D supplements for muscle, bone and nerve health.

Examples of medicines that increase fall risk include:

- Depressants like alcohol and sleeping pills
- Stimulants like nicotine or caffeine
- Opioids or pain medicine
- Medicine that can cause sleepiness or confusion
- Medicine that can cause low blood pressure

What can you do?

- Do balance and strengthening exercises at least three times a week.
- Ask your doctor to do a fall risk screening and tell them if you have fallen recently.
- Always wear shoes that fit your feet well and have solid, non-skid soles.
- Have your vision checked by an eye doctor every year, and wear glasses if needed.
- Talk with your provider about whether physical therapy would be helpful to find out why you may have been falling more and how to prevent future falls.



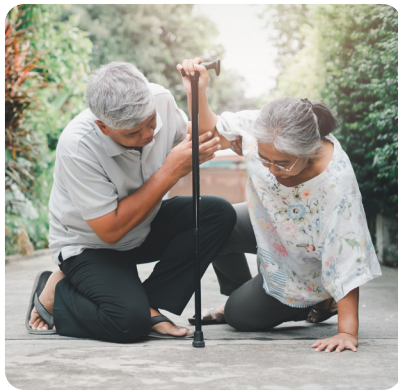
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Make your home safe

- Make sure you have enough light in all rooms of your home.
- Place a lamp close to the bed.
- Use nightlights for improved safety with walking at night.
- Move furniture to make sure walkways are clear.
- Remove rugs, or use double-sided tape or nonslip backing so rugs do not slip.
- Pick up things on the floor or stairs.
- Coil and tape cords and wires next to the wall so you can't trip on them.
- Keep items in kitchen on lower shelves to avoid using chairs or a step stool to reach things.
- Have grab bars put in next to the shower and toilet.

What to do if you fall

Check yourself for major injuries. If you think you may have a major injury, do not get up without help.



FIND HELP

- Can you get someone's attention by shouting or banging?
- If you wear a personal safety alarm, press it.
- If your phone is within reach, make a call if possible.

GET COMFORTABLE

- Find a nearby pillow, cushion, or rolled up item of clothing to put under your head.

KEEP WARM

- Cover yourself with clothing, tablecloth or rug.

KEEP MOVING

- Change your position to keep from getting pressure sores.
- Move your joints to keep them from getting stiff and to help with circulation.
- If you have urinated (peed), try to roll away from the damp area to protect your skin.



How to get up if you are not injured and able

1. If you think you are not hurt, look for a chair, staircase, or other sturdy piece of furniture that is closest to you.
2. Roll onto your side by turning your head in the direction you want to roll, then move your shoulder and arm, followed by hip and leg.
3. Slowly push your upper body up.
4. Move to your hands and knees, and crawl to the chair or other sturdy furniture.
5. Put your hands on the chair and place one foot forward so it's flat on the floor, while other knee stays bent and on the floor.
6. Slowly push up from the floor with your hands and turn your body to sit in the chair.
7. Sit for a few minutes before trying to stand.
8. Even if you feel okay, tell someone what happened. You might not know that you are hurt.

Learn more

Contact your local community or senior center for information on exercise, fall prevention programs, and ways to help the safety in your home, or visit:

- stopfalls.org
- ncoa.org/older-adults/health/prevention/falls-prevention
- Search go.usa.gov/xN9XA for a list of fall prevention resources



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425.690.3650 valleymed.org/rehab



Use the Google Translate app for your language

Exercises for Fall Prevention

Physical activity is the single most important thing you can do to reduce your fall risk

Chair Rise Exercise

Instruction

- Begin sitting at edge of chair
- Feet flat on the floor
- Arms across chest
- Stand up fully, then sit down slowly with control
- Do as many as you can (with control) in 30 seconds



Why Do It?

- ❖ Inability to stand up and sit down repeatedly without the use of arms is a risk for falls

Check your risk

Number of stands in 30 seconds
Values below norms listed indicate risk for falls

Age	Male	Female
60-69	12	11
70-79	11	10
80-89	8	8

If Too Difficult:

- Stand from a higher surface such as a bed
- Add a cushion to the chair
- Use hands on arm rests or hands on thighs to help push up
- Have a family member stand next to you



To Add More Challenge:

- Try to take 5 or more seconds to lower
- Rise up **quickly** with speed and control
- Sway arms up overhead as you stand
- Place one leg slightly more forward
- Place one leg slightly out to side
- Stand up as shown, then take a step and reach as if about to get out of a chair to shake someone's hand
- Sit part of the way down, then rise to stand
- Have a family member tell you to quickly (and randomly) **change** your movement to either standing or sitting
- Try with eyes closed—have family member next to you initially for safety
- Do any of the variations in combination

Safety First:

- ❖ **Make sure your doctor has cleared you to exercise before attempting!**
- ❖ **Do not attempt this exercise or any variations unless you feel safe.**
- ❖ **Stop this exercise or make it easier if you notice pain, shortness of breath or racing heartbeats.**

Exercises for Fall Prevention

Physical activity is the single most important thing you can do to reduce your fall risk

Ankle Sways

Instruction

- Begin standing with feet hip-width apart
- Have a chair in front of you for safety
- Shift your weight to the right side as far as possible, then return to center
- Repeat to the left side
- Keep your feet flat on the floor
- Do not bend at the waist.
- Imagine that you are a tree swaying and make your movement come from the ankle
- See how far you can shift



Why Do It?

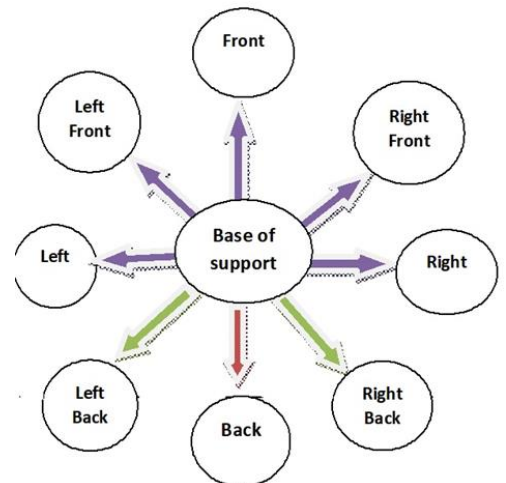
- ❖ The ability to make small adjustments at the ankle is critical for balance
- ❖ Research has shown that repeated fallers are less able to react at the ankles to maintain balance
- ❖ The greater you can shift your weight without bending at the waist, or taking a step, the greater your “limits of stability” which will allow you to do more activities with greater confidence

If Too Difficult:

- Stand with feet wider apart
- Stand in a corner with a chair in front
- Have a family member stand next to you
- Begin with tiny slow movements

To Add More Challenge:

- Stand with feet closer together
- Add different directions (see graphic)
 - Note: backward sways most challenging
- If able, let go of the chair and pretend to hold an imaginary ball or gently reach with an arm in the direction that you are shifting your weight, but do NOT bend at the waist
- Vary the speed: slow, fast
- Pause at the farthest point that you can shift
- Avoid stopping in the center, make random patterns as you shift



Safety First:

- ❖ **Make sure your doctor has cleared you to exercise before attempting!**
- ❖ **Do not attempt this exercise or any variations unless you feel safe.**
- ❖ **Stop this exercise or make it easier if you notice pain, shortness of breath or racing heartbeats.**

Exercises for Fall Prevention

Physical activity is the single most important thing you can do to reduce your fall risk

Weight-Shifting

Instruction

- Stand behind a chair with one foot forward at a diagonal as shown
- Keep feet flat on the floor
- Start by shifting all your weight onto the back leg
- Then shift all your weight onto the forward leg
- Extend an arm gently forward, but do NOT bend at the waist
- See how far you can shift your weight in each direction



Why Do It?

- ❖ This exercise works on balance needed just before taking a step forward or backwards

If Too Difficult:

- Widen your stance
- Start with small slow movements
- Have a family member stand beside you

To Add More Challenge:

- Shift further forward and lift back heel up
- Shift farther back and raise front toes up
- Vary the speed: slow, fast
- Pause at furthest limit
- Try not to hold chair



Safety First:

- ❖ **Make sure your doctor has cleared you to exercise before attempting!**
- ❖ **Do not attempt this exercise or any variations unless you feel safe.**
- ❖ **Stop this exercise or make it easier if you notice pain, shortness of breath or racing heartbeats.**

Know Where to Go

Our Therapy Services teams are here to help get you back to the life you love!

We partner with you to develop a customized plan to improve your health, functional performance and participation in every day activities.

	Lifestyle Medicine	Outpatient Therapy Services
INJURY/CONDITION THERAPY		
Acute Sprain/Strain	■	■
Chronic/Overuse Injuries	■	■
Surgical Rehabilitation	■	■
Pre-Surgical Optimization	■	
Sports Therapy	■	■
Hand Therapy/Orthotics		■
SPECIALIZED PROGRAMS		
Oncology Health Optimization	■	
Cancer – Pre/Post Surgery	■	■
Lymphedema	■	■
Vestibular/Balance Training	Covington/Renton	■
Pelvic Floor Rehabilitation	■	
Wheel Chair Assessment/Fitting		■
Prosthetics Training/LE Amputee		■
Orthotic Fabrication/Training	■	
Occupational / Work Injury Rehab	■	■
Work Conditioning (WC)		■
NEUROLOGICAL REHABILITATION		
Spinal Cord Injury		■
Acute Stroke/Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)		■
Concussion	Renton location	■
DISEASE MANAGEMENT & PREVENTION		
Cardiac Rehabilitation	■	
Pulmonary Rehabilitation	■	
COVID Recovery Program	■	
Diabetes Prevention Program	■	
Healthy Foundations Program	■	
Health Risk Assessment/Management	■	
Prescribed Exercise Programming	■	
Fitness & Wellness Programs	■	
COLLABORATIVE SERVICES		
PT + Nutrition	■	
Multiservice patients OT/PT/SLP		■

Lifestyle Medicine



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Renton

4011 Talbot Rd. S, 1st Floor
 Renton, WA 98055
 P. 425.690.3520
 F. 425.690.9520

Maple Valley

24060 SE Kent Kangley Rd.
 Suite D-100
 Maple Valley, WA 98038
 P. 425.690.3522
 F. 425.690.9522

Covington

17307 SE 272nd St.
 Suite 126
 Covington, WA 98042
 P. 425.690.3521
 F. 425.690.9521

Outpatient Therapy Services

Northwest Pavilion,
 Ground Floor
 400 South 43rd Street
 Renton, WA 98055

valleymed.org/rehab

P: 425.690.3650
F: 425.690.9650

Getting Your Affairs in Order Checklist: Documents to Prepare for the Future- *from the US Dept of Health National Institute of Aging*

Create your own plan

No one ever plans to be sick or disabled. Yet, planning for the future can make all the difference in an emergency and at the end-of-life. Being prepared and having important documents in a single place can give you peace of mind, help ensure your wishes are honored, and ease the burden on your loved ones.

Checklist for getting your affairs in order

This list provides common steps to consider when getting your affairs in order.

1. Plan for your estate and finances. Depending on your situation, you may choose to prepare different types of legal documents to outline how your estate and finances will be handled in the future. Common documents include a will, durable power of attorney for finances, and a living trust.

- A **will** specifies how your estate — your property, money, and other assets — will be distributed and managed when you die. A will can also address care for children under age 18, adult dependents, and pets, as well as gifts and end-of-life arrangements, such as a funeral or memorial service and burial or cremation. If you do not have a will, your estate will be distributed according to the laws in your state.
- A **durable power of attorney for finances** names someone who will make financial decisions for you when you are unable to.
- A **living trust** names and instructs a person, called the trustee, to hold and distribute property and funds on your behalf when you are no longer able to manage your affairs.

2. Plan for your future health care. Many people choose to prepare advance directives, which are legal documents that provide instructions for medical care and only go into effect if you cannot communicate your own wishes due to disease or severe injury. The most common advance directives include a living will and a durable power of attorney for health care.

- A **living will** tells doctors how you want to be treated if you cannot make your own decisions about emergency treatment. You can say which common medical treatments or care you would want, which ones you would want to avoid, and under which conditions each of your choices applies. Learn how to [prepare a living will](#).
- A **durable power of attorney for health care** names your health care proxy, a person who can make health care decisions for you if you are unable to communicate these yourself. Your proxy — also known as a representative, surrogate, or agent — should be familiar with your values and wishes. A proxy can be chosen in addition to or instead of a living will. Having a health care proxy

helps you plan for situations that cannot be foreseen, such as a serious auto accident or stroke. Learn how to [choose a health care proxy](#).

These documents are part of [advance care planning](#), which involves preparing for future decisions about your medical care and discussing your wishes with your loved ones.

3. Put your important papers and copies of legal documents in one place. You can set up a file, put everything in a desk or dresser drawer, or list the information and location of papers in a notebook. For added security, you might consider getting a fireproof and waterproof safe to store your documents. If your papers are in a bank safe deposit box, keep copies in a file at home. View a [list of important papers](#).

4. Tell someone you know and trust or a lawyer where to find your important papers. You don't need to discuss your personal affairs, but someone you trust should know where to find your papers in case of an emergency. If you don't have a relative or friend you trust, ask a lawyer to help.

5. Talk to your loved ones and a doctor about advance care planning. A doctor can help you understand future health decisions you may face and plan the kinds of care or treatment you may want. Discussing [advance care planning](#) with your doctor is free through Medicare during your annual wellness visit. Private health insurance may also cover these discussions. Share your decisions with your loved ones to help avoid any surprises or misunderstandings about your wishes.

6. Give permission in advance for a doctor or lawyer to talk with your caregiver as needed. If you need help managing your care, you can give your caregiver permission to talk with your doctors, your lawyer, your insurance provider, a credit card company, or your bank. You may need to sign and return a form. Giving permission for your doctor or lawyer to talk with your caregiver is different from naming a health care proxy. A health care proxy can only make decisions if you are unable to communicate them yourself.

7. Review your plans regularly. It's important to review your plans at least once each year and when any major life event occurs, like a divorce, move, or major change in your health.

Which documents do you need to have in place?

When you're getting your affairs in order, it's important to prepare and organize important records and files all in one place. Typically, you will want to include personal, financial, and health information. Remember, this is a starting place. You may have other information to add. For example, if you have a pet, you will want to include the name and address of your veterinarian.

Personal information

- Full legal name
- Social Security number

- Legal residence
- Date and place of birth
- Names and addresses of spouse and children
- Location of birth and death certificates and certificates of marriage, divorce, citizenship, and adoption
- Employers and dates of employment
- Education and military records
- Names and phone numbers of religious contacts
- Memberships in groups and awards received
- Names and phone numbers of close friends, relatives, doctors, lawyers, and financial advisors

Financial information

- Sources of income and assets (pension from your employer, IRAs, 401(k)s, interest, etc.)
- Social Security information
- Insurance information (life, long-term care, home, car) with policy numbers and agents' names and phone numbers
- Names of your banks and account numbers (checking, savings, credit union)
- Investment income (stocks, bonds, property) and stockbrokers' names and phone numbers
- Copy of most recent income tax return
- Location of most up-to-date will with an original signature
- Liabilities, including property tax — what is owed, to whom, and when payments are due
- Mortgages and debts — how and when they are paid
- Location of original deed of trust for home
- Car title and registration
- Credit and debit card names and numbers
- Location of safe deposit box and key

Health information

- Current prescriptions (be sure to update this regularly)
- Living will
- Durable power of attorney for health care
- Copies of any [medical orders or forms](#) you have (for example, a do-not-resuscitate order)
- Health insurance information with policy and phone numbers

Who can help with getting your affairs in order?

You may want to talk with a lawyer about setting up a general power of attorney, durable power of attorney, joint account, or trust. Be sure to ask about the lawyer's fees before you make an appointment.

You do not have to involve a lawyer in creating your advance directives for health care. Most states provide the forms for free, and you can complete them yourself. Learn more about [completing an advance directive](#).

You should be able to find a directory of local lawyers on the internet or contact your local library, your local bar association for lawyers, or the Eldercare Locator. Your local bar association can also help you find what free legal aid options your state has to offer. An informed family member may be able to help you manage some of these issues.

What other decisions can you prepare for in advance?

Getting your affairs in order can also mean making decisions about organ donation and funeral arrangements, or what you want to happen to your body after you die. Deciding and sharing your decisions can help your loved ones during a stressful time and best ensure your wishes are understood and respected.

Organ donation and brain donation. When someone dies, their healthy organs and tissues may be donated to help someone else. You can register to be an organ donor when you renew your driver's license or state ID at your local department of motor vehicles. You can also register online. Some people also choose to donate their brain to advance scientific research. It may be possible to donate organs for transplant as well as the brain for scientific research. Learn more about [organ donation](#) and [brain donation](#).

Funeral arrangements. You can decide ahead of time what kind of funeral or memorial service you would like and where it will be held. You can also decide whether you would like to be buried or cremated and whether you want your body's ashes kept by loved ones or scattered in a favorite place. Be sure and specify certain religious, spiritual, or cultural traditions that you would like to have during your visitation, funeral, or memorial service. You can make arrangements directly with a funeral home or crematory. Read these [tips on planning a funeral](#). If you choose not to be embalmed or cremated, most states allow families to take care of transportation, preparation of the body, and other needed arrangements. Learn more about the [burial options available in your state](#). Put your preferences in writing and give copies to your loved ones and, if you have one, your lawyer.

Please visit the National Institute on Aging for more information and to sign up for emails:
<https://www.nia.nih.gov/>

Durable Medical Equipment Suppliers

MOBILITY EQUIPMENT SUPPLIERS

Company	Address	Phone	Website/Other
Access Medical Equipment Co	4300 Talbot Rd S #106; Renton WA 98055	Phone: 425-228-2210	(Formerly Cornell's). Does rentals of medical equipment as well as sales, they do not bill insurance.
American Seating and Mobility	170 Stewart Rd SW, Pacific WA 98047	Phone: 253-896-3535; FAX: 866-557-6939	www.as mrehab.com
Bath+ (division of Bellevue Healthcare)		Phone: 425-941-2258	www.bath-plus.com Bathroom Modifications, Home accessibility, and lifts
Bellevue Healthcare		Phone: 866-451-2842 Fax: 425-467-6661	https://bellevuehealthcare.com/Documents/BHC-Contracted-Insurance-List-2021.pdf Multiple DME items, contracted with Medicare/Medicaid, and multiple other plans, contracted list is here:
Lincoln Pharmacy	821 S 38th St; Tacoma WA 98418	Phone: 253-473-1155 Fax: 253-473-1158	www.lincolnrx.com Manual wheelchairs, home health care/medical/bariatric supplies,diabetic shoes and inserts. Will bill Medicare and most insurance companies.
MD Medical Supplies	7687 S 180th St; Kent WA 98032	Phone: 425-556-1490 Fax: 425-867-5087	https://www.mdmedicalsupplies.com Contracted with Medicare/Medicaid
National Seating and Mobility	34310 9th Ave S Suite 105; Federal Way WA 98003	Phone: 360-532-2222 Fax: 360-533-4320	https://www.nsm-seating.com/
Norco Seattle	4135 Stone Way N Seattle WA 98103	Phone: 206-547-2200 Fax: 206-971-3883	https://www.norco-inc.com/
Norco Tacoma	1902 Tacoma Ave S; Tacoma WA 98402	Phone: 800-735-7156 Fax: 253-474-4869	https://www.norco-inc.com/
Northwest Access Fund		Phone: 206-328-5116	https://pacmedicalop.com/ Low interest loans for assistive technology
Numotion Seattle		Phone: 206-204-3330 Fax: 206-204-0131	www.numotion.com
Numotion Tacoma	11106 25 th Ave E #A; Tacoma WA 98445	Phone: 253-830-2020 Fax: 253-537-0208	www.numotion.com
Professional Medical Corp	12733 28 th Ave NE; Seattle WA 98125	Phone: 800-741-3996 Fax: 888-741-3997	https://professionalmedicalcorp.com Contracted with WA Medicaid, also services COPES and MAC/TSOA clients for approved supplies
Ramp Arts		Phone: 206-440-9999	www.rampartsnw.com Home ramp installation, free estimates
Sound Health Medical	2811 S 12th St; Tacoma WA 98405	Phone: 253-274-5000	www.soundhealthmedical.com Multiple mobility items, Medicare-contracted

DISCOUNT/DONATED EQUIPMENT

Company	Address	Phone	Website/Other
Access Medical Equipment Co	9550 Aurora Ave N; Seattle WA 98013	Phone: 206-365-7700	www.accessmedicalequipment.com No insurance billing, offers used equipment and rental options
Bridge Ministries	12340 Northup Way, Bellevue WA 98005 or 1120 Industry Drive, Tukwila WA 98188	Phone: 253-277-2041 (Tukwila) or (425)-628-1751 (Bellevue)	www.bridgemin.org Donated equipment (free or low cost)
Discount Medical Supply	5510 6th Avenue; Tacoma WA 98406	Phone: 253-752-7900	New and pre-owned equipment, rentals, no insurance billing
Maple Valley Community Center Lending Closet		Phone: 425-432-1272	Call for available inventory
MSHH Donor Closet	409 Howell Way, Edmonds WA or 3635 S Lawrence St, Tacoma WA	Phone: 425-712-1807 (Edmonds) 253-327-1033 (Tacoma)	Low cost refurbished DME, locations in Tacoma and Edmonds http://www.mshh-donorcloset.com/
Wheelchair Haven	8411 Pacific Hwy E; Tacoma WA 98422	Phone: 253-926-8971 Fax 253-926-2488	New and pre-owned mobility equipment, rent-to-own option, no insurance billing

Durable Medical Equipment Charting Tips for Providers:

<https://bellevuehealthcare.com/partners/partner-resources/>

Apple Health/Medicaid Durable Medical Equipment Guides: <https://www.hca.wa.gov/billers-providers-partners/programs-and-services/durable-medical-equipment-dme>

Home Assessment and Repair

Organization/Company	Phone	Notes
King County EMS Fall Prevention (One Step Ahead)	206-263-8544	Free program, 50+, King County resident and have fallen within the past 6 months and called 911. Home safety walk, education, installation of fall safety devices as determined. For private homes only https://kingcounty.gov/depts/health/emergency-medical-services/community/fall-prevention.aspx
King County Housing Repair	206-263-9095	Provides funding for housing repair services to low-income homeowners and special needs renters in King County https://kingcounty.gov/depts/community-human-services/housing/services/housing-repair.aspx
Valley Regional Fire Authority CARES	253-288-5887 Email: askthevrfa@vrfa.org	Trained staff from King County Emergency Medical Services (EMS) will assess patients' risk for falling and survey the home for safety. They will receive recommendations for preventing falls and possibly installation of assistive devices free of charge. To request a free evaluation of fall risk in the home, contact the CARES team (servicing the cities of Algona, Auburn, and Pacific) https://www.vrfa.org/docs/fall-prevention/
Puget Sound FD CARES	253-856-4300	Serves Kent/Covington/Maple Valley/Seatac https://pugetsoundfire.org/fdcare/
City of Seattle Home Repair	206-684-0244	Serves city of Seattle residents https://www.seattle.gov/housing/homeowners/home-repair
Sound Generations Minor Home Repair program	206-448-5751	Serves Seattle/Shoreline Bellevue area https://soundgenerations.org/our-programs/minor-home-repair/
Covington Minor Home Repair	253-480-2411	Serves Covington city limits
Des Moines Minor Home Repair program	206-870-6535	Serves Des Moines city limits
Kent Minor Home Repair program	253-586-5065	Serves Kent city limits
Renton Housing Repair Assistance	425-430-6693	Serves Renton city limits
Seatac Minor Home Repair program	206-973-4815	Serves Seatac city limits
Tukwila Minor Home Repair program	206-433-7180	Serves Tukwila city limits
Habitat for Humanity Home Repairs	206-855-5083	Eligible to apply if you live in SE Seattle, White Center, SE Renton, Federal Way, Glendale, Bryn Mawr and Skyway and meet income requirements https://www.habitat.org/volunteer/near-you/home-preservation

Rebuilding Together Seattle	206-682-1231	Serves greater Seattle area http://www.rtseattle.org/
Rebuilding Together South Sound	253-238-0977	Serves Pierce County and cities of Federal Way and Auburn. Also has a volunteer ramp build in October https://rebuildingtogether.org/
Rampathon	425-860-8232	Currently on hold due to COVID-19 https://www.mbaks.com/community/rampathon
ALISA (Aging & Long Term Support Administration)	1-800-422-3263 option #6	If you are covered by Medicaid, COPES or have developmental disability, you may be able to get financial assistance with home modifications
Triumph Foundation	661-803-3700	assists people with spinal cord injuries get necessary adaptive equipment for ADLs, home modifications for wheelchair accessibility https://triumph-foundation.org/
Multiple Sclerosis Foundation		Assistive Technology program for those with MS diagnosis, includes home and vehicle modifications. Application online at https://msfocus.org/Get-Help/MSF-Programs-Grants/Assistive-Technology-Program
Bryon Riesch Paralysis Foundation	262-547-2083	For those with neurological disorders (preference going to spinal cord injuries), request should be for a specific item or modification https://brpf.org/charitable-grant-application/

Home Health Agencies

Amicable Home Health	Intake Phone: 206-444-7410 Intake Fax: 206-926-9212 Office Phone: 206-444-7410 Office fax: 206-246-0562	Services King, Pierce and Snohomish County
Assured Home Health Renton	Phone: 425-336-0008 Intake Fax: 844-238-0067 Office fax: 425-336-0010	Services south of downtown Seattle, South King County and some Eastside King County
Assured Home Health Puyallup	Phone: 253-838-7916 Intake Fax: 844-238-0067 Office fax: 253-838-7094	Services Pierce County
Assured Home Health Mountlake Terrace	Phone: 206-364-1484 Intake Fax: 844-238-0067 Office fax: 206-364-1286	Services downtown Seattle and north, also Kirkland, Redmond, and Woodinville
Brookdale Home Health	Phone: 206-417-7700 Intake/office fax: 206-417-7701	Services King and Snohomish Counties
Careage Home Health King County	Phone: 425-519-1265 Intake/office fax: 425-861-7879	Services King County
Careage Home Health Pierce County	Phone: 253-254-6933 Intake/office fax 253-507-7099	Services Pierce County
CHI Franciscan Home Health	Phone: 253-534-7090 Intake Fax: 253-534-7610	Services Pierce County
Eden Home Health	Phone: 206-717-8161 Intake/office fax: 206-899-1641	Services King County
Envision Home Health King County	Phone: 206-452-0058 Intake/office fax: 844-500-0721	Services King County
Envision Home Health Pierce County	Phone: 253-509-5004 Intake/office fax: 844-500-0721	Services Pierce County
Evergreen Home Health	General phone: 425-899-3300 General fax: 425-899-1016 Intake phone: 425-899-3970 Intake fax: 425-899-3228	Services King and Snohomish counties
Kindred at Home (Bellevue)	Phone: 425-827-2415 Intake fax 877-814-1971	Services Renton north-King County
Kindred at Home (Kent)	Phone: 253-395-5133 Fax: 253-395-8746 Intake Phone: 253-395-3470 Intake Fax: 888-814-1970	Services Renton south-King County
Kindred at Home (Puyallup)	Phone: 253-435-9953 Intake Fax: 888-914-5978	Services Pierce County
Kindred at Home (Seattle)	Phone: 206-729-7773 Intake fax: 1-888-814-1968	Services greater Seattle area
Kline Galland Home Health	Phone: 206-805-1930 Office/intake fax: 206-805-1931	Services King County

Multicare Home Health	Phone: 253-301-6400 Intake/office fax: 253-301-6528	Services Pierce County
Providence Home Health	Phone: 425-525-6800 Intake/office fax: 425-525-6825	Services King County
Puget Sound Home Health	Phone: 253-581-9410 Fax: 253-581-9207	Services King and Pierce counties
Signature Home Health	Phone: 253-661-5166 Intake/Office Fax: 866-567-6279	Services King/Pierce/Snohomish/Skagit/Whatcom counties
Wesley Homes Home Health	Phone: 206-870-1127 Intake/office fax: 206-870-4165	Services King and Pierce Counties

*Please contact the individual agencies for specific zip codes served and current availability.

Personal Emergency Response Systems

ADT Medical Alert	Phone: 800-588-0023	www.adt.com/health
Bay Alarm Medical	Phone: 877-695-0058	www.bayalarmmedical.com
Life Alert	Phone: 800-982-0332	www.lifealert.net
Lifefone Medical Alert Services	Phone: 800-331-9198	www.lifefone.com
Medical Alert	Phone: 800-320-0586	www.medicalalert.com
Medical Care Alert	Phone: 855-661-3378	www.medicalcarealert.com
Medical Guardian	Phone: 800-485-2218	www.medicalguardian.com
Mobile Help	Phone: 800-808-5956	www.mobilehelp.com
One Call Alert	Phone: 800-804-8969	www.onecallalert.com
Philips Lifeline Medical Alert Systems	Phone: 855-681-5351	www.lifelinesys.com
Pioneer Medical Alarms for Seniors	Phone: 800-824-8844	www.pioneeremergency.com
Response Link	Phone: 866-802-3676	www.responseslink.com
Safetyline	Phone: 866-344-4267	www.safetylineusa.com

Insurance Notes

While original Medicare does not cover these systems, some Medicare Advantage plans may. Contact the patient's Medicare Advantage Plan to confirm coverage.

Medicaid may cover these systems, please check with your patient's plan and/or case worker to confirm coverage.

Transportation Resources

Volunteer/No Cost Transportation

Sound Generations Volunteer Transportation: 206-448-5740

<https://soundgenerations.org/our-programs/transportation/volunteer-transportation/>

- Patient must live in King Co, age 60+, able to transfer into a vehicle with minimal assistance.
- Rides must be called in the Tuesday prior to any appointments the following week.

Hyde Shuttle: 206-727-6262

<https://soundgenerations.org/our-programs/transportation/hyde-shuttle/>

- Door to door van service for adults 55+ and adults with disabilities in many King County cities.
- Operates 8 AM-4 PM and shuttles only travel inside city limits of participating cities. See website for current list of cities participating.

Catholic Community Services Volunteer Transportation: 844-851-9380

<https://ccsww.org/get-help/services-for-seniors-people-with-disabilities/volunteer-services/volunteer-services-king-county/>

- Limited services at this time due to COVID-19, some outside yard work and grocery/medication deliveries

HopeLink: 800-923-7433

<https://www.hopelink.org/need-help/transportation>

- For Medicaid clients only (that have Apple Health or have CNP/CNP-QMB)

Fee-based transportation

TriMed Cabulance: 206-988-5000

<https://www.trimedambulance.com/cabulance/>

- Fees approximately \$85 one-way, services King County.

Northwest Transport: 800-600-9225

<http://www.nwt1cabulance.com/>

- Non-emergency cabulance and ambulatory transport for King, Pierce and Snohomish County. See website for rates. Door to door service.

Around the Sound: 253-858-7088

<https://atstrans.org/medical-transportation/>

- Non-emergency cabulance transportation, serves Puget Sound area

Tri-County Cabulance: 206-553-1003 or 425-775-8358

<http://tricitycabulance.com/>

- Non-emergency cabulance transportation, serves King and Snohomish County

Help Lines

Search tool for transportation services in King, Pierce and Snohomish County (tools for VA and Medicaid transportation, also regional transit trip planning resources): www.findaride.org

Hopelink Mobility Line (one-on-one support with finding transportation options): 425-943-6760 option 2

Caregiving Agencies

Bright Star Care	Phone: 206-777-1190	www.brightstarcare.com
Catholic Community Services	Phone: 206-328-5787	https://ccsww.org/get-help/services-for-seniors-people-with-disabilities/home-care/
Comfort Keepers	Phone: 253-200-0038	https://www.comfortkeepers.com/offices/washington/
EverHome Health Care	Phone: 425-275-5858	www.everhomehealthcare.com
Family Resource Home Care	Phone: 253-761-8019	www.familyresourcehomecare.com
Fedelta Home Care	Phone: 206-362-2366	www.fedeltahomecare.com
Home Care Assistance	Phone: 425-553-0997	www.homecareassistance.com/bellevue
Kline Galland Home Care	Phone: 206-805-1930	https://www.klinegalland.org/care-options/community-based-services/home-care/
Serengeti Care	Phone: 425-272-9272	www.serengeticare.com
Sound Options	Phone: 800-628-7649	www.soundoptions.com
Synergy Home Care	Phone: 425-988-3759	https://www.synergyhomecare.com/agencies/wa/
Visiting Angels	888-943-3208	https://www.visitingangels.com/renton/home https://www.visitingangels.com/seattlewa

Additional caregiver resources:

1. Community Living Connections: Phone 1-844-348-5464
<https://www.communitylivingconnections.org/wecanhelp/caregivers/>

Community Living Connections provides caregiver support resources, including referrals to support groups, training on caregiving topics, respite care, possible screening for Medicaid Alternative Care and Tailored Support for Older Adults caregiver programs.
2. DSHS brochure on Medicaid Alternative Care and Tailored Support for Older Adults caregiving programs:
<https://www.wsha.org/wp-content/uploads/ALSTA-Medicaid-Half-fold-22-1739.pdf>
3. Home Care Referral Registry of Washington State: Phone 1-800-970-5456
<http://hccr.wa.gov/>
Matches Washington residents who receive publicly funded in-home care services with screened and pre-qualified home care workers.

Community Activities for Seniors

Renton City Hall - Recreation & Neighborhoods (Virtual)

https://rentonwa.gov/city_hall/community_services/recreation_and_neighborhoods/lets_go_virtual

- Age-Friendly Renton Virtual Talk Series: 2nd & 4th Tuesdays of every month, 2-3 pm
- Community Fitness on-demand fitness instruction videos:
<https://www.communityfitness.com/at-home-workout-on-demand/>
 - Dance fitness, strength & cardio, barre, yoga & wellness, Pilates, indoor cycle
 - 6 free sample workouts, then \$8-\$28 to continue
- CorePower Yoga on-demand free virtual classes (free 7-day trial):
<https://www.corepoweryogaondemand.com/keep-up-your-practice>

Kent Senior Activity Center (Virtual)

<https://webreg.kentwa.gov/Activities/ActivitiesAdvSearch.asp>

The Kent Senior Activity Center offers seven different live, free weekly virtual fitness classes for seniors at different times of the day.

- All virtual adult fitness classes are FREE and taught via Zoom.
- Pre-registration is required, and Zoom links are emailed a few hours in advance.
- Classes offered: Back to Fitness Basics, Circuit Mix, Beginning Yoga, Core Strength, Yoga for All, Zumba, Full Body Fitness

Auburn Senior Activity Center / Auburn City Hall

https://www.auburnwa.gov/city_hall/parks_arts_recreation/virtual_recreation

- Senior Programs: 10-minute chair workout, 40-minute fitness blend, Mindful Mondays, weekly virtual Zoom games, Friday support group, Silver & Fit 30-minute live workout every weekday at 10 am, etc.
- Fitness & Wellness Programs: 10-minute morning stretch workout, Mamma Mia Walking Workout, 15-minute Qigong stretching and flexibility practice, SAIL with Abby, Yoga with Erin, Silver Sneakers, etc.

Enumclaw Senior Center

<https://www.cityofenumclaw.net/177/Senior-Center>

- Lots of virtual activity and fitness options to explore – click on “Virtual Programs” and the latest Senior Center Newsletter links on the right side of the site for more details
- Virtual programs include links to free Fitness and Mindfulness weekly classes on YouTube, including Silver & Fit Balance, 5-minute Stretching, Energizing Yoga, Meditation for Beginners, and more.

SeaTac Senior Program @ SeaTac Community Center

<https://www.seatacwa.gov/services/senior-program>

- Seniors Working Out (in-person with social distancing and masks):
 - Mon/Wed/Fri 8-9 am
 - To register call 206-973-4680
- Comfort Keepers virtual Zoom classes:
 - Topics include Planning for Long-Term Care, Eat Better/Feel Better, Dizziness & Imbalance in Older Adults, etc.
 - Visit www.seatacwa.gov/services/senior-program to view latest SeaTac Senior Flyer with dates and times.
 - Call 253-945-1400 or email southseattle@comfortkeepers.com to register.

Tukwila Community Center

<https://www.tukwilawa.gov/departments/parks-and-recreation/athletics-fitness/>

- FREE Senior Zoom Classes with Christina:
 - Each Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 11–11:50 am
 - Classes include 30 minutes of movement followed by 20 minutes of social time.
 - Attendees can request to have a fitness pack delivered to their door which includes small hand weights, ankle weights, an exercise ball, and exercise band. The packs are available for loan for as long as the program is offered virtually.
 - For more information, email sports@TukwilaWA.gov or call 206-767-2822
- Silver & Fit:
 - This exercise and healthy aging program is specifically designed for older adults who want to improve their quality of life through exercise and fun. Silver & Fit delivers daily live classes (Silver&Fit At Home), virtual fitness mixers, articles, recipes, and movement motivation.
 - They offer daily classes at 10am: [facebook.com/SilverandFit/](https://www.facebook.com/SilverandFit/)
- Silver Sneakers:
 - For older adults and those looking for a gentle workout, Silver Sneakers offers daily live classes, articles, and motivation: [facebook.com/silversneakers](https://www.facebook.com/silversneakers).
 - Silver Sneakers also offers a wide variety of live classes and workshops offered throughout the day on their website: Silver Sneakers Live

All information subject to change-
please visit each specific web-page or facility for the most up-to-date information



The 5Ms of Geriatrics

Even though people all over the world are living longer and healthier lives, our health can change over time because of the different conditions and concerns we may face. Many of us, especially as we reach our mid-70s and beyond, may develop different combinations of diseases, health conditions, and disabilities. Our health needs become more complex as we get older, and what matters most to us may vary also.

Geriatrics healthcare professionals, like geriatricians and many others who have advanced training in the care of older adults, can play an essential role in diagnosing and managing these conditions and health needs based on what matters to each person. Geriatrics providers focus on 5 key areas, known as the Geriatric 5Ms*. The “Ms” stand for the targets that are important to care for us all as we age.

Geriatric 5Ms Focus Areas

Mind

- Maintaining mental activity
- Helping manage dementia (a decline in memory and other mental abilities that make daily living difficult)
- Helping treat and prevent delirium (an abrupt, rapid change in mental function that goes well beyond the typical forgetfulness of aging)
- Working to evaluate and treat depression (a mood disorder that can interfere with all aspects of your daily life)

Mobility

- Maintaining the ability to walk and/or maintain balance
- Preventing falls and other types of common injuries

Medications

- Reducing polypharmacy (the medical term for taking several medications)
- De-prescribing (the opportunity to stop unnecessary medications)
- Prescribing treatments exactly for an older person’s needs
- Helping build awareness of harmful medication effects

Multi-Complexity

- Helping older adults manage a variety of health conditions
- Assessing living conditions when they are impacted by age, health conditions, and social concerns

Matters Most

- Coordinating advance care planning
- Helping manage goals of care
- Making sure that a person’s individual, personally meaningful health outcomes, goals, and care preferences are reflected in treatment plans

The Team Approach

Geriatrics also is known for its team-based approach to caring for older people and working with families and other caregivers. The geriatrics care team may include (but is not limited to) any or all of the following professionals:

- Geriatricians
- Nurses
- Nurse practitioners
- Physician assistants
- Social workers
- Consultant pharmacists
- Nutritionists
- Physical therapists
- Occupational therapists
- Speech and hearing specialists
- Psychiatrists
- Psychologists

These professionals evaluate an older adult's medical, social, emotional, and other needs. The team also helps manage multiple chronic conditions and medications and focuses on health concerns common in older people, such as falls, memory concerns, and incontinence (inability to hold urine or feces).

Geriatrics team duties include:

- Evaluating a person's social supports and living situation
- Considering the person's ability to perform daily activities such as bathing, dressing, and eating
- Giving special attention to personal preferences and values when it comes to planning our care

When to Consult a Geriatrics Healthcare Professional

Consider consulting a geriatrician or other geriatrics healthcare professional when:

- You or an older person you know has health conditions that cause significant impairment or frailty. Impairment most often occurs when people are over the age of 75. Older adults who benefit most from geriatrics expertise typically have a number of diseases and disabilities, including cognitive (or memory) concerns.
- Family members and friends are under significant stress as caregivers.
- You, an older person you know, or their caregivers have trouble following complex treatments or managing relationships with many healthcare providers for multiple health conditions.

How Can I Find a Geriatrics Healthcare Professional?

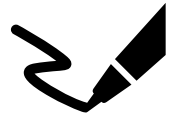
You can use our free Find a Geriatrics Healthcare Professional tool (www.healthinaging.org) to get an instant list of healthcare providers in your area who are trained in the special health care needs of older adults. Search by city, state, or zip code or call 800-563-4916 to have a list mailed to you.

Falls Journal: record your falls here as soon as possible after they happen

Date and Time when you had your fall?	Where were you when you fell?	What were you doing and why do you think you fell?	What can you change to keep from falling again?



Your Falls Action Plan:



Problems Identified	Action Plan

