



Live a Full Life!

LA Falls Prevention Coalition

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Falls Defined

Falls are an unplanned descent to the floor or a lower surface



• In the U.S. **A Current Look at Falls**



- 3 million seniors visit the Emergency Room for a **fall injury** every **year** (CDC--National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. [Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System \(WISQARS\)](#))
- At least 250,000 people (65yrs. And older) visit the hospital for a hip fracture each year. (CDC, 2016)
- In County of LA, 2013 there were 19,312 non-fatal hospitalization and 287 deaths in our senior population due to **falls**. (EPIC, 2016)

<https://www2c.cdc.gov/podcasts/downloader/download.mp3?af=a&f=8643609>

Falls Are Expensive!



- In 2015, the total medical costs for falls totaled more than \$50 billion.
¹¹ Medicare and Medicaid shouldered 75% of these costs (CDC)



What happens when you fall

- Life may change
- Possible loss of independence
- And for some, disability



According to the CDC:



- Falls can cause broken bones, like wrist, arm, ankle, and hip fractures.
- Falls can cause head injuries. These can be very serious, especially if the person is taking certain medicines (like blood thinners). An older person who falls and hits their head should see their doctor right away to make sure they don't have a brain injury.
- Many people who fall, even if they're not injured, become afraid of falling. This fear may cause a person to cut down on their everyday activities. When a person is less active, they become weaker and this increases their chances of falling.¹²



What Puts You at Risk For Falls

- History of fall/falls
- Weakness in the lower body
- Difficult to walk or achieve balance
- Lack of enough Vitamin D in the body
- Medications both over the counter & prescribed
- Vision Problems
- Foot pain and footwear
- Home Hazards

Stay Independent Questionnaire

12 important items that identify risk

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. Discuss this brochure with your doctor.	

Falls are Preventable!

- ✓ Meet with your Doctor
- ✓ Exercise
- ✓ Eye exam
- ✓ Changes in the home





Medication Review

- Maintain a current list of all prescription drugs and doses
- Review your medications regularly, including herbs and supplements with your doctor or healthcare provider
- Ask yourself questions like: Do any of these make you dizzy, sleepy or unsteady? If so, call your doctor's office.

Exercise



- ✓ Lower Body strength and balance e.g. Otago Exercise Program
- ✓ Tai Chi, esp. those programs for older adults
- ✓ Continue with **home exercise** program you received from your physical therapist
- ✓ Attend **group exercise** programs
- ✓ And stay active

LAFallsPrevention.Org

Eye Exam



- Once a year – or more - have an eye doctor check your eyes
- Update your glasses if needed
- Wear protective lenses for outdoor activity (walking)

Home Safety



Photo: Courtesy of Heart of Ida, Long Beach, CA

- ▶ Use non-skid mat in the tub or shower
- ▶ Install grab bars in the tub and shower and next to the toilet
- ▶ Use a taller/raised toilet seat if needed.
- Stairs and walkways should be well lit
- Remove smaller “throw rugs”
- Keep electric wires out of walking areas

Take Action! Live a Full Life!



National Council on Aging

<https://www.ncoa.org/healthy-aging/falls-prevention/falls-prevention-programs-for-older-adults/>

Centers for Disease Control

<http://www.cdc.gov/homeandrecreationalafety/falls/>

National Institute of Health

<http://nihseniorhealth.gov/falls/aboutfalls/01.html>