



## Four things you can do to prevent falls:

- 1 Begin an exercise program to improve your leg strength & balance
- 2 Ask your doctor or pharmacist to review your medicines
- 3 Get annual eye check-ups & update your eyeglasses
- 4 Make your home safer by:
  - Removing clutter & tripping hazards
  - Putting railings on all stairs & adding grab bars in the bathroom
  - Having good lighting, especially on stairs



"It's not the broken hip, it's the nursing home I don't want. I need to be independent, so I take Tai Chi."

*Leonard Jones, age 74*

"People who use canes are brave. They can be more independent and enjoy their lives."

*Shirley Warner, age 79*



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

For more information on fall prevention, please visit:

[www.cdc.gov/injury](http://www.cdc.gov/injury)

[www.stopfalls.org](http://www.stopfalls.org)

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

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# Stay Independent

Falls are the main reason why older people lose their independence.

## Are you at risk?

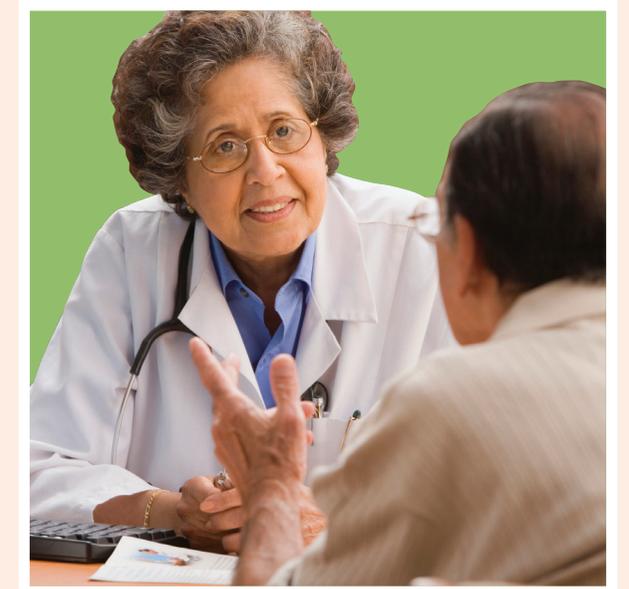


# Check Your Risk for Falling

Please circle "Yes" or "No" for each statement below.			Why it matters
Yes (2)	No (0)	I have fallen in the last 6 months.	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.	

## Your doctor may suggest:

- Having other medical tests
- Changing your medicines
- Consulting a specialist
- Seeing a physical therapist
- Attending a fall prevention program



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.