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Preventing Falls: How to Prepare and What to Do

Falling is not something you want to think about. But it can make a big difference to plan ahead. If you're prepared, you'll know how to get help. And you'll be less likely to panic if you fall. This means you'll be able to do what's needed to get help right away.



How to prepare

- Have someone check on you daily.
- Keep a list of emergency numbers near the phone.

- Always have a way to call for help. Keep a cell phone with you at all times. Or talk with your healthcare provider about how to set up a home monitoring service. This involves wearing a small device around your neck or wrist. If you fall, you can press the button on the device. This alerts emergency responders.
- Talk with your healthcare provider about an exercise program that's right for you. Regular exercise may reduce the risk of falling and the risk for injury related to a fall.
- It's important to have good lighting in your home. Avoid using throw rugs, because they can raise your risk of tripping and falling. Add grab bars in the bathroom to help reduce the risk of falling. Small changes can make your home safer. Talk with your healthcare provider about making your home safer.

What to do if you fall

Above all, try to stay calm:

- If you start to fall, try to relax your body. This will reduce the impact of the fall.
- After you fall, press your monitor button, or phone for help.
- Don't rush to get up. First, make sure you're not hurt.
- Roll onto your side, then crawl to a chair. Pull yourself up onto the chair slowly.
- You should be checked if you struck your head, lost consciousness, were confused afterward, or have any other concerns for injury.
- Be sure to tell your doctor that you fell.

A note to family and friends

If you're with a loved one when he or she starts to fall, don't try to stop the fall. Ease the person to the floor carefully, so neither of you gets hurt. Don't leave the person alone. And don't try to move him or her. Put a pillow under his or her head. Check for injuries. If help is needed right away, be sure to call 911.

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