

Dizziness (Vertigo) and Balance Problems: Staying Safe

Falls or accidents can lead to pain, broken bones, and a hospital stay. They can also cause fear of future falls. Protect yourself and others by preparing for vertigo episodes. Simple steps can help you stay safe at home and no matter where you go.

Lighting



Keep all areas well lit. This helps your eyes send the right signals to the brain. It also makes you less likely to trip and fall. If bright lights make symptoms worse, dim the lights or lie in a dark room until you aren't dizzy any more. Then turn the lights back to their normal level.

Tips:

- Keep a flashlight by the bed.
- Place nightlights in bathrooms and hallways.
- Replace burned-out bulbs. Or have someone replace them for you.

Preventing falls

To reduce your risk of falling:

- Get out of bed or up from a chair slowly.
- Never go barefoot.
- Wear low-heeled shoes that fit properly and have non-slip soles.

- Remove throw rugs. Clear clutter from walkways.
- If you have pets, know where they are so you don't trip over them. Keep pet toys off of the floor.
- Use handrails on stairs. Have handrails installed or adjusted if needed.
- Install grab bars in the bathroom. Don't use towel racks for balance.
- Use a shower stool. Also put adhesive strips on the floor of the shower or tub.
- Sit down to put on clothes or shoes.

Going out

With a little time and preparation, you can get around safely.

Tips:

- Use a cane or other walking aid if needed.
- Give yourself plenty of time.
- Ask your health care provider what type of exercise is safe for you. If you need help with exercise, ask your health care provider about a physical therapy referral.
- Be patient. If an activity, such as walking through a crowded shop, causes you stress, you may not be ready for it yet.

Driving

If you become dizzy or disoriented while driving, you could hurt yourself and others. That's why it's best not to drive until symptoms have gone away. In some cases, your license may be held until it's safe for you to drive again.

For safety:

- Ask a friend to drive for you.
- Use public transportation or a rideshare service such as Uber or Lyft.
- Walk to stores and other places when you can.

Support

Don't be afraid to ask for help with errands, meals, and other activities. Whether it's a friend, loved one, neighbor, or stranger on the street, a little help can make a big difference. Ask your health care provider for a list of community resources if you need help staying independent at home.