
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, either in person or by phone.
- 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.
- Have good lighting in your home. Don't use 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 use your phone to call 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.
- Get checked if you struck your head, lost consciousness, were confused afterward, or have any other concerns for injury.
- Tell your healthcare provider that you fell. They can check you for injuries as needed, try to determine what made you fall, and help prevent you from falling again.

A note to family and friends

If you're with a loved one when they start 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 them, especially if they may have hurt their head or neck. Check for injuries. If help is needed right away, call 911.