



COULD YOU BE AT RISK FOR FALLING?

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

Read the following statements to see if they apply to you.

I have fallen in the past year.

Why it matters: People who have fallen once are more likely to fall again.

Actions to staying independent: Learn more on how to reduce your fall risk.

I use or have been advised to use a cane or walker to get around safely.

Why it matters: People who have been advised to use a cane or walker may already be more likely to fall.

Actions to staying independent: Talk with a physical therapist about the most appropriate walking aid for your needs.

Sometimes, I feel unsteady when I am walking.

Why it matters: Unsteadiness or needing support while walking are signs of poor balance.

Actions to staying independent: Exercise to build up your strength and improve your balance, as this is shown to reduce the risk for falls.

I steady myself by holding onto furniture when walking at home.

Why it matters: This is also a sign of poor balance.

Actions to staying independent: Incorporate daily balance exercises and reduce home hazards that might cause a trip or slip.

I am worried about falling.

Why it matters: People who are worried about falling are more likely to fall.

Actions to staying independent: Knowing how to prevent a fall can reduce fear and promote active living.

I need to push with my hands to stand up from a chair.

Why it matters: This is a sign of weak leg muscles, a major reason for falling.

Actions to staying independent: Strengthening your muscles can reduce your risk of falling and being injured.

I have some trouble stepping up onto a curb.

Why it matters: This is also a sign of weak leg muscles, a major reason for falling.

Actions to staying independent: Daily exercise can help improve your strength and balance.

I often have to rush to the toilet:

Why it matters: Rushing to the bathroom, especially at night, increases your chance of falling.

Actions to staying independent: Talk with your doctor or incontinence specialist about solutions to decrease the need to rush to the toilet.

I have lost some feeling in my feet.

Why it matters: Numbness in your feet can cause stumbles and lead to falls.

Actions to staying independent: Talk with your doctor or podiatrist about management options.

I take medicine to help me sleep or improve my mood.

Why it matters: Side effects from medicines can sometimes increase your chance of falling.

Actions to staying independent: Talk with your doctor or pharmacist about medication side effects that may increase the risk of falls.

I often feel sad or depressed.

Why it matters: Symptoms of depression, such as not feeling well or slowed down, are linked to falls.

Actions to staying independent: Talk with your doctor about symptoms of depression, and help with finding positive solutions.

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; 42(6)493-499).

The content is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. Always seek the advice of your physician or other qualified professional with any questions you may have regarding a medical condition.