

Check Your Risk For Falling

Please circle “Yes” or “No” for each statement below.

Why it matters

Yes (1)	No (0)	I have fallen in the past year.	People who have fallen once are likely to fall again.
Yes (1)	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 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.

Greater Los Angeles VA Geriatric Research Education Clinical Center and Affiliates.
(Rubenstein et. al. (2011).
J Safety Res, 42(6)

Community Resources

Exercise programs

SAIL - Stay Active and Independent for Life - www.SAILfitness.org
Enhance Fitness - www.projectenhance.org/locations
Tai Ji Quan: Moving for Better Balance - www.betterbalance.net
YMCA Moving for Better Balance - Contact your local YMCA
Silver Sneakers - www.silversneakers.com

Home safety and other resources

Aging Disability and Resource Center
253-798-4600 or 800-562-0332
www.PierceADRC.org
Rebuilding Together South Sound
Free home modifications and repairs for low-income homeowners
www.rebuildingtogetherss.org or 253-238-0977, 8:30 am-5:00 pm
Monday through Friday
Washington State Department of Health
www.doh.wa.gov/YouandYourFamily/InjuryandViolencePrevention/OlderAdultFalls/FallPreventionResources
211 – Local referral assistance
(8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. Dial 211)

National Council on Aging
www.ncoa.org

Centers for Disease Control & Prevention
www.cdc.gov/steady

Scan the code to visit our YouTube video ▶

SCAN ME



Stepping Ahead

For a Falls Free Community



Pierce County Fall Prevention Coalition

Pierce County Fall Prevention Coalition information:
Facebook: www.facebook.com/Pierce-County-Fall-Prevention-Coalition
Website: fallsfreepiercecounty.org
Email address: pcfpcalition@gmail.com

fallsfreepiercecounty.org

Falls are a major threat to health and independence of older adults, people aged 65 and older. Each year in the United States, nearly one-third of older adults experience a fall. About one out of ten falls among older adults result in serious injury, such as a hip fracture or head injury that require hospitalization. In addition to the physical and emotional pain, many people need to spend at least a year recovering in a long-term care facility, and some never return to their homes. Falls are the leading cause of injury deaths among older adults.

REDUCING YOUR RISK – a few important strategies to reduce your risk for falls.

- Begin an exercise program to improve your strength and balance.
- Ask your doctor to review your medications.
- Get annual eye check-ups and update your eyeglasses.
- Make your home safe –remove throw rugs, install wall grab bars, have railings on both sides of the stairs.



EXERCISE

Keeping in good physical condition with moderate daily exercise will reduce your risk of falls. Regular exercise can:

- Improve your muscle tone, strength and endurance.
- Keep joints, tendons and ligaments more flexible for unrestrictive movement.
- Increase your sense of balance, agility and confidence.
- Increase your stamina and energy.

VISION

Have your vision checked annually. Eye disease or normal aging may make it difficult for older adults to read fine print, judge distance or identify objects clearly.



MEDICATION MANAGEMENT

- Review medications with your doctor.
- Keep a completed and updated medication list and always carry it with you.
- Take your medications as prescribed. Don't skip or decrease the dose.
- Report adverse drug reactions to your doctor.
- Never use someone else's medications and discard old unused medications.

Stay Safe

- **Clear, dry walkways reduce slips and trips.**
- **Good lighting improves vision and balance.**
- **Stairs with railings on BOTH sides are safest.**
- **Keep items within your reach at waist level.**
- **Wear footwear with a tread to grip the floor.**

YOUR HOME SAFETY CHECKLIST

Compare your home to the items on this lists. Note the areas that need improvement to keep your home working for you.

Lighting

- ☐ Light bulbs should be 60–70 watts in all rooms and stairways.
- ☐ Replace burned-out bulbs promptly.
- ☐ Keep several flashlights in the house and check the batteries regularly.

Floors and Walkways

- ☐ Arrange furniture so that you have plenty of room to walk without obstacles.
- ☐ Keep walkways free of cords, furniture, clutter and other obstacles.
- ☐ Remove throw rugs or secure them with double-stick tape or tacks.
- ☐ If you have hardwood floors, consider carpets. Hardwood floors have a greater risk of fractures.
- ☐ Use non-slip or non-skid floor wax—or none at all.
- ☐ Don't "leave it for later." Take care of spills and dropped objects promptly.

Steps and Stairways

- ☐ All stairs and steps should have secure handrails on both sides.
- ☐ Check the condition of the stairs for loose carpet, loose steps or uneven steps.
- ☐ Stairways should be well-lit with light switches at the top and bottom.
- ☐ Keep stairs free of clutter.

Living Room

- ☐ Make sure your furniture is easy for you to get in and out of (knee height or higher is easiest).
- ☐ Keep a phone on a low table within reach of the floor.
- ☐ Arrange the room to create clear walking spaces.

Kitchen

- ☐ Keep regularly-used items within comfortable reach.
- ☐ Never climb on chairs—only use step-stools with a handlebar on the back.

Bathrooms

- ☐ Put grab bars by the toilet and in the shower or tub to give you extra support.
- ☐ Put a non-slip mat or non-slip adhesive strips in the shower or tub to help prevent slips.

Yards, Outdoor Stairs, and Walkways

- ☐ Keep outdoor stairs and walkways well-lit and free of breaks and cracks.
- ☐ Make sure there are handrails on both sides of stairs.
- ☐ Look out for uneven ground, stones, branches, pets, garden hoses or tools.
- ☐ Factor in the weather—any type of wet or icy walkways can cause slips.