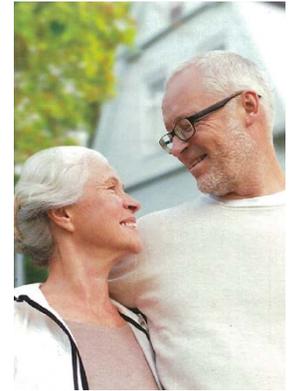


# Freedom from Falls



## Simple ways you can prevent falls to stay safe and comfortable in your home.

One in four people over the age of 65 fall every year. Falls is the number one injury seen in our local emergency departments. Falls cause many injuries, including torn muscles, broken bones, a lengthy stay at a nursing home, or even death. Please review the six ways you can assess and lower your risk of falls.

### 1. Stay Strong and Stable

Simple strength and balance exercises are proven to reduce falls. They can be done in the convenience of your own home or in a group setting.

- Hold onto something sturdy and practice standing on one foot or standing on your tiptoes.
- Use a cane, walker, or other assistive devices when walking on uneven surfaces like a sidewalk or lawn.
- Share your concerns with your primary doctor or physical therapist who can help with a home exercise program for you.

### 2. Review your Medications

Talk to your primary doctor and or pharmacist about any medication you are taking. Some medications are known to increase your risk of falling, and many cause fatigue, dizziness, or slowed reaction time. Even over-the counter medications such as Tylenol Pm and Advil Pm place you at a greater risk.

### 3. Get Your Eyes Checked

- Get your vision checked yearly or with any change in your vision.
- Bifocals or trifocals can alter your depth perception and make it easier to lose your balance.

### 4. Make Your Home Environment Safer

About half of all falls happen at home. Below are some things you can do to eliminate the risk of experiencing a fall in your home.

- Remove throw rugs, cords, furniture, and other tripping hazards from walkways.
- Keep indoor and outdoor pathways well lit.
- Repair loose handrails and torn carpet.
- Store items on waist-level shelves and avoid using step stools.
- Install grab bars where needed.
- Place non-slip material on the shower floor.
- Wear shoes while walking inside and outside for better stability in unfamiliar areas.
- Use a cane when walking in unfamiliar areas.
- Take your time around small pets as they move quickly and can be a tripping hazard.

### 5. Limit Alcohol Consumption

The combination of alcohol and medications can create a false confidence in strength and balance. To reduce your chance of falling, alcoholic beverages should be avoided. Discuss limiting alcoholic beverages with your primary doctor.

## 6. Recognize the Patterns

When did you fall, loose your balance, or nearly fall? Record your experiences in order to identify a pattern that may exist. Identifying these patterns can help you and your doctor understand what caused the experience and how you can stop it from happening again. (Use the chart below to record your experiences.)

Did you fall, think you would fall, or nearly fall (date, time, and as many details as possible)?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

Why did this happen? (Tripped on a cord, lost balance, felt dizzy after taking medication, etc.).

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

Take these steps to Live Fall Free

If you are concerned about falls, schedule a visit with your primary doctor and bring this information with you. Together, you can develop a plan to minimize your risk and keep your independence. Stay safe, active and fall free.

### From more information:

[www.adrcobrowncounty.org](http://www.adrcobrowncounty.org)

Select Stay Healthy Stay Active

*Take a Stepping On Class. It is a fall prevention program for seniors 60+ that have fallen, have a fear of falling or want to avoid falling. The workshop runs for 7 weeks, meeting 2 hours each week. Call 448-4300 to register for one in your community.*

[www.ncoa.org](http://www.ncoa.org)

Select healthy aging, and then fall prevention

[www.mayoclinic.org](http://www.mayoclinic.org)

Select healthy aging

Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) of Brown County helps you find services so you can live how you want to live, where you want to live. The ADRC is your no cost, unbiased source for answers and solutions. Call them today at (920) 448-4300.

If you fall and call a local emergency service provider for assistance, they may ask you if you would like to be referred to the ADRC. Say "YES" to participate in their fall prevention program. The ADRC is here to help you remain independent and safe.

(Updated: April 2019)

## BROWN COUNTY PREVENTION COALITION

