



LEARNING TOOLS

1. [Service Provider Resource - Summer 2017: Fall Prevention Newsletter](#)
2. [Service Provider Resource - Training Guide for Fall Prevention](#)
3. [Service Provider Resource - Fall Prevention Provider Leadership Strategies](#)
4. [Service Provider Resource - Knowledge Check: Fall Prevention](#)
5. [Supporter Resource - You Can Prevent Falls](#)
6. [Supporter Resource - Risk For Falling Checklist](#)
7. [Supporter Resource - What to Do If Someone Falls](#)
8. [Self-Advocate Resource - 6 Tips to Keep You From Falling](#)
9. [Self-Advocate Resource - What to Do If I Fall](#)
10. [Self-Advocate Resource - Check Your Risk For Falling](#)
11. [Self-Advocate Resource - Video: You Can Keep From Falling*](#)

**Not available in this packet. Please visit the DDS SafetyNet to watch these videos.*

GENERAL INFORMATION

SafetyNet Learning Tools are designed to assist in providing information on a specific topic and to be used in a variety of learning environments. These Learning Tools can be used during one-on-one conversations with an individual, or with small and larger groups.

Before beginning a learning session, the presenter should review all SafetyNet Learning Tools on the topic. The trainer can find additional material within the links provided on the SafetyNet Article and Newsletter.

BEFORE THE TRAINING

The presenter should:

- Arrange adequate time and comfortable space for the training and discussion.
- Arrange for any equipment needed, such as a laptop and projector.
- Set up necessary equipment.
- Print or photocopy enough materials for each individual to have their own copy.

TRAINING

The presenter:

- Shows videos.
- Leads discussion of content and encourages open communication.
- Reviews and discusses information on each of the handouts.
- Asks questions to check for understanding.
- Follows up with additional review and discussion as needed.
- Provide training in multiple sessions to assure adequate coverage and understanding of the topic.



You Can Prevent Falls*

Why should I be concerned about falls?

Falls are a significant health risk. Falls are the leading cause of injury related to hospitalization. Falls threaten a person's health and their quality of life.

Adults with developmental disabilities have an increased risk of falling – 1 in 3 compared to 1 in 5 in the general population over the age of 65. In addition, they are more likely to experience an injury, such as a broken bone or head injury, after a fall. And, with each fall, the chance of falling increases.

What can I do to prevent falls?

Falls are preventable. As a service provider, you can help prevent falls by training staff to practice the four "E"s:

- **E**valuation
- **E**xercise
- **E**nvironment
- **E**ducation

Most falls are caused by a combination of personal and environmental risk factors. Personal risk factors include side effects from medication, underlying medical conditions, poor eyesight, unsteady gait and balance, and muscle weakness. Environmental factors such as poor lighting, unstable furniture, clutter and other hazards in the home, also contribute to falls.

Evaluation – What increases a person's risk of falling?

Evaluation of personal risk of falling is the first step in planning for fall prevention. The risk of

falling is increased for a person who has: fallen before; difficulty walking; poor balance; difficulty rising from a low chair or bed; poor eyesight or hearing; been taking multiple medications; foot pain or been wearing improper footwear; or a fear of falling. Have staff begin the evaluation by asking these simple questions.

- Did the person fall in the past year?
- Does the person seem unsteady when standing or walking?
- Do they worry about falling?

If the answer is "Yes" to any of these questions, further evaluation is needed. Complete the "Supporter Resource: Risk for Falling Checklist" (<http://ddssafety.net/safety/fall-prevention/supporter-resource-risk-falling-checklist>) to help identify personal risk factors.

The next step is to talk to the person's doctor about the person's fall risk. Start with the completed checklist. Discuss medical conditions such as epilepsy or osteoporosis that may increase a person's risk of falling and injury. Urinary tract infections can cause disorientation and fatigue.

Talk to the doctor to understand how medications may affect a person's strength and balance. Have an eye doctor check vision and renew eyeglass prescriptions each year. Assistive devices such as wheelchairs, canes and walkers are meant to decrease risk. However, they may create an additional risk factor if not maintained or used properly. Also, make sure the person has comfortable and proper foot wear.



*For more information, links to fall prevention tools and an index to the Fall Prevention materials, go to SafetyNet - **Supporter Article: You Can Prevent Falls** (<http://ddssafety.net/safety/fall-prevention/supporter-article-you-can-prevent-falls>).



Preventing Falls - continued



Exercise – How does it help?

Everyone can benefit from exercise. Physical activity – walking, gardening, dancing, swimming, Tai Chi – can all help to increase strength, mobility and balance for all individuals, but especially those at risk for falling.

Staff can explore the community. Go for a walk. Find classes offered through churches, parks and recreation services, and senior centers. All of these provide exercise classes specifically designed to increase strength and balance.

Getting people interested and committed to an exercise program isn't always easy. Go4Life (<https://go4life.nia.nih.gov/>) provides motivational ideas for both support staff and persons at risk. The site also provides activities and exercises specifically designed to help people build balance and keep from falling. Work together to create a plan for safe physical activity (what, when, where) and do it. Everyone will benefit.

Environment – What can I do to increase home safety?

Most falls happen in the home. Falls are often due to hazards that are easy to fix. Find and fix hazards in the home using the "Check for Safety" checklist (https://www.cdc.gov/steady/pdf/check_for_safety_brochure-a.pdf). Look at

floors, stairs and steps, kitchen, bathroom and bedrooms for: poorly lit rooms, hallways and stairwells; broken or uneven steps or other surfaces; throw rugs that can be tripped over; no handrails along stairs or in the bathroom; broken or unstable furniture; wet slippery surfaces; unexpected obstacles; and, wires, cords and clutter. Most things are simple fixes that can literally save a person's life.

Also be aware of outdoor hazards such as uneven sidewalks, curbs, and slippery streets after a rain. Make sure people have shoes fit for the activity and weather.

Education – How do I bring fall prevention into practice?

Train staff how to recognize risks for falls and prevention steps to take. Train staff to identify, remove, or fix environmental hazards, or report problems as needed. And finally, make sure staff and persons at risk know how to prevent falls and what to do if someone falls.

SafetyNet Fall Prevention Learning Tools are designed to help you educate both staff and people at risk (<http://ddssafety.net/safety/fall-prevention/training-guide-fall-prevention>).

Develop a fall prevention plan for every person identified as being at risk. Enlist support staff, the person at risk, and as needed, their doctor, physical therapist and others in developing and implementing the plan. Make sure everyone knows what to do. Keep awareness high. Check for success. Meet with support staff and the person at risk on a regular basis to discuss implementation of fall prevention plans. Review documentation from any falls. Talk about what works or doesn't work for the individual. Make changes to the plan as necessary.



Training Guide for Fall Prevention

Summary: Falls are a significant health risk. Falls are the leading cause of injury related to hospitalization. Falls threaten a person's health and their quality of life. Adults with developmental disabilities have an increased risk of falling – 1 in 3 compared to 1 in 5 of the general population over the age of 65. In addition, they are more likely to experience an injury, such as a broken bone or head injury, after a fall. And, with each fall, the chance of falling increases. Falls are preventable. This training packet will focus on prevention of falls using the four **E**'s.

Goals: At the end of this class, participants should be able to:

- Understand the importance of preventing falls.
- Describe the four **E**'s —
 - * **E**valuation
 - * **E**xercise
 - * **E**nvironment
 - * **E**ducation
- Identify the steps to take when a fall occurs.

Materials Needed: Depending on the method of presentation you select , you will need:

Physical Materials:

- Chart or poster paper
- Markers
- Handouts
- Equipment to show materials on TV or monitor

Provider Materials:

- Spring 2017 Newsletter: You Can Prevent Falls - <http://ddssafety.net/safety/fall-prevention/spring-2017-newsletter-you-can-prevent-falls-0>
- Fall Prevention Provider Leadership Strategies - <http://ddssafety.net/safety/fall-prevention/fall-prevention-provider-leadership-strategies>

Supporter Materials:

- Supporter Article: You Can Prevent Falls - <http://ddssafety.net/safety/fall-prevention/supporter-article-you-can-prevent-falls>



Training Guide - continued

- Supporter Resource: Risk for Falling Checklist - <http://ddssafety.net/safety/fall-prevention/supporter-resource-risk-falling-checklist>
- Supporter Resource: What to Do if Someone Falls - <http://ddssafety.net/safety/fall-prevention/supporter-resource-what-do-if-someone-falls>
- Knowledge Check: Fall Prevention - <http://ddssafety.net/safety/fall-prevention/knowledge-check-fall-prevention>

Tools for Individuals:

- Tip Sheet #1 Check Your Risk for Falling - <http://ddssafety.net/safety/fall-prevention/tip-sheet-check-your-risk-falling>
- Tip Sheet #2 6 Steps to Keep You From Falling - <http://ddssafety.net/safety/fall-prevention/tip-sheet-6-steps-keep-you-falling>
- Tip Sheet #3 What to Do If I Fall? - <http://ddssafety.net/safety/fall-prevention/tip-sheet-what-do-if-i-fall>
- Video: You Can Keep from Falling - <http://ddssafety.net/node/983>

Preparation:

Review all SafetyNet materials listed above. In addition, managers, trainers, and administrators should review the Fall Prevention Provider Leadership Strategies and Spring 2017 Newsletter: You Can Prevent Falls. Depending on the method or presentation you choose:

- Set-up equipment for presentation.
- Print out/photocopy Supporter and Individual materials.
- Print out/photocopy Knowledge Check: Fall Prevention.

Presentation:

There are many ways to present this material, including:

- **Print the Supporter and Individual materials** and go through them as a group with discussion. End the session with the Knowledge Check: Fall Prevention and a discussion of the answers.
- **Use a computer and a projector**, TV monitor, or monitor with an internet connection to show the **Supporter and Individual materials** (either downloaded onto your computer or directly on the website). End the session with the Knowledge Check: Fall Prevention and a discussion of the answers.
- **Print the Supporter and Individual materials as handouts for self-study**. Each participant then completes the Knowledge Check: Fall Prevention and discusses answers with other staff as a group.



Training Guide - continued

Suggested Activities for Sessions on Fall Prevention:

- Use **Supporter Resource: Risk for Falling Checklist** to evaluate the fall risk of an individual that you support. Enlist support staff, the person at risk, and as needed, their doctor, physical therapist and others in developing and implementing the plan. Make sure everyone knows what to do. Include in the plan:
 - A plan for regular physical activity that fits with the person's interests and abilities;
 - A plan for proper use and maintenance of assistive devices;
 - An annual appointment with the person's eye doctor to review vision;
 - An annual visit with the person's doctor to review medications and talk about medical conditions that increase fall risk; and,
 - A plan for regular re-evaluation of personal and environmental risks.
- Demonstrate the use of the **Log for Falls (Supporter Resource What to Do if Someone Falls)** with either hypothetical information or actual information from a recent fall of a staff or an individual you support. Present a hypothetical situation and ask staff to log it.
- Work through **Check for Safety: A Home Fall Prevention Checklist** as a group to evaluate a home or work place. Ask staff to complete the checklist and then discuss answers as a group.
- Hand out the **Knowledge Check: Fall Prevention** at the end of your session on Fall Prevention. Ask participants to complete, but mention it will not be scored. Once completed, discuss the answers as a group. Review materials as needed.



Fall Prevention Provider Leadership Strategies

As an administrator or manager of Direct Support Professionals, here are some tips and examples of management strategies that can help reduce falls in your organization.

Learn much as possible about how falls happen

1. Are there times of day when falls are most likely—e.g. toward the end of the day or the end of DSPs' shifts?
2. Are there places in a person's home, day program, or workplace where falls are most likely—e.g. staircases, curbs?
3. Are there activities that seem to be associated with falls?
4. What individual characteristics make falls likely?
5. What physical characteristics of facilities make falls more or less likely?

Once you have identified basic characteristics of falls for the people you support, here are some examples of strategies that might assist you in developing a Fall Prevention Plan in general and for specific individuals at high risk for falling.

Some Examples of Fall Prevention Leadership Strategies

1. **Treating staff as professional equals.**
 - Accept staff ideas about how best to prevent falls among the individuals that they serve.
2. **Get to know your staff and their lives.**
 - What stresses do they face in their lives?
 - Are they tired?
 - What could you do to make their lives easier?
3. **Avoid a top-down approach to preventing falls.**
 - The top-down approach fails to take advantage of the fact that staff know the people they serve and, in particular, when they are at high risk of falling.
4. **Do not rely exclusively on training or re-training.**
 - When an adverse event happens, start with the idea that the event may be evidence of an *organizational* problem.
 - Relying on training assumes that falls happen because staff are not trained well enough.
 - Ask whether your method for training staff works.

With a Fall Prevention plan developed with DSPs, you will be on your way to reducing and preventing falls with the individuals you support.



Knowledge Check: Fall Prevention

1. Name the four E's and briefly describe each:

E

E

E

E

2. Describe the steps of what to do if someone falls:



Answers

1.

- Evaluation:
 - Evaluate for personal risk factors. Identify persons at increased risk.
 - Ensure people have vision checked annually and keep glasses updated.
 - Have a doctor or pharmacist routinely check all medications, including over the counter medications, for increased risk of falls.
- Exercise – Exercise – Exercise:
 - Promote healthy lifestyles including access to physical activity. Participation in a good balance or exercise program is key to fall prevention.
- Environment:
 - Ensure home and community safety. Conduct onsite home safety checks and make necessary changes.
- Education:
 - Make fall prevention a priority. Educate yourself, support staff and people at risk as to its importance.
 - Develop and implement individualized fall prevention plans for people at risk.

2.

1. Listen to what the person is telling you.
2. Observe the position of **the person's body and look for** signs of bleeding, broken bones, or breathing problems.
3. Ask the individual what he or she is feeling.
4. Call 911 for emergency help! If a person appears to be seriously hurt, is bleeding badly, or complains of sharp pain, call 911. Do not move them.
5. Notify **the person's doctor and give them details of the** fall - when, where and how the person fell.
6. Document what happened – both the fall and follow-up. Keep a running log of falls to develop a history of falls. The documentation should be completed after every fall.



SafetyNet: Spring 2017

Supporter Article: You Can Prevent Falls

Outline:

Why should I be concerned about falls?

What can I do to prevent falls?

- *Evaluation – **What increases a person's risk of falling?***
- *Exercise – How does it help?*
- *Environment – What can I do to increase home safety?*
- *Education – How do I bring fall prevention into practice?*

What should I do if someone falls?

Remember the 4 E's: Evaluation – Exercise – Environment – Education

SafetyNet Resource List and Links to Other Resources

Why should I be concerned about falls?

Falls are a significant health risk. Falls are the leading cause of injury related to hospitalization. Falls threaten a person's health and their quality of life.

Adults with developmental disabilities have an increased risk of falling – 1 in 3 compared to 1 in 5 in the general population over the age of 65. In addition, they are more likely to experience an injury, such as a broken bone or head injury, after a fall. And, with each fall, the chance of falling increases.

People who fall, even if they are not injured, may develop a fear of falling. A fear of falling can cause a person to limit their daily activities, both social and physical. Again, the chance of falling increases.



What can I do to prevent falls?

Falls are preventable. As a supporter, you can help prevent falls by practicing the four “E”s:

- ✓ Evaluation
- ✓ Exercise
- ✓ Environment
- ✓ Education

Most falls are caused by a combination of personal and environmental risk factors. Personal risk factors include side effects from medication, underlying medical conditions, poor eyesight, unsteady gait and balance, and muscle weakness. Environmental factors such as poor lighting, unstable furniture, clutter and other hazards in the home, also contribute to falls.

Evaluation – **What increases a person’s** risk of falling?

Evaluation of personal risk of falling is the first step in planning for fall prevention. The more risks a person has, the greater their chance of falling. The risk of falling is increased for a person who:

- Has fallen before;
- Has difficulty walking;
- Has poor balance and muscle weakness;
- Has difficulty rising from a low chair or bed;
- Has poor eyesight or hearing;
- Gets dizzy or light-headed when standing or turning;
- Has a Vitamin D deficiency;
- Uses an assistive device such as a wheelchair, cane or walker;
- Takes multiple medications;
 - Uses medications such as tranquilizers, sedatives, antidepressants or antipsychotics;
 - Takes medications, including over the counter medications, that cause drowsiness;
- Suffers from confusion, depression or memory loss;
- Has foot pain or wears improper footwear; and,
- Has a fear of falling.



Begin the evaluation by asking these simple questions.

- ✓ Did the person fall in the past year?
- ✓ Does the person seem unsteady when standing or walking?
- ✓ Do they worry about falling?

If the answer is “Yes” to any of these questions, further evaluation is needed. Complete the “Supporter Resource: Risk for Falling Checklist” (<http://ddssafety.net/safety/fall-prevention/supporter-resource-risk-falling-checklist>) to help identify personal risk factors.

The next step is to talk to the **person’s doctor about the person’s fall risk**. Start with the completed checklist. Discuss medical conditions such as epilepsy or osteoporosis that may increase **a person’s risk of falling and injury**. Urinary tract infections can cause disorientation and fatigue.

Treating osteoporosis with calcium supplements and weight bearing activities can help reduce the risk of injury. Ask the doctor about the need for supplements and what types of activities are best.

Talk to the doctor to understand how medications may affect a **person’s strength and balance**. A person taking four or more medications has more than twice the risk of falling.

Among other things, the doctor may recommend:

- Changing medications;
- Consulting with a physical therapist; and,
- Taking other tests.

Have an eye doctor check vision and renew eyeglass prescriptions each year. Poor vision makes it difficult for the person to walk up and down stairs, detect variations in surface elevation and see objects that may make them trip and fall.

Assistive devices such as wheelchairs, canes and walkers are meant to decrease risk. However, they may create an additional risk factor



if not maintained or used properly. Make sure assistive devices are kept in good repair and are used correctly. Also, make sure the person has comfortable and proper foot wear.

Exercise – How does it help?

Everyone can benefit from exercise. Physical activities – walking, gardening, dancing, swimming, Tai Chi – can all help to increase strength, mobility and balance for all individuals, but especially those at risk for falling.

Exercise and physical activity help a person:

- Maintain and improve their physical strength and fitness;
- Improve their ability to do everyday activities;
- Improve their balance;
- Manage and improve diabetes, heart disease, osteoporosis and other diseases; and,
- Reduce feelings of depression and improve mood and overall well-being.

Explore the community. Go for a walk. Find classes offered through churches, parks and recreation services, or senior centers. All of these provide exercise classes specifically designed to increase strength and balance.

Getting people interested and committed to an exercise program isn't always easy. Go4Life (<https://go4life.nia.nih.gov/>) provides motivational ideas for both support staff and persons at risk. The site also provides activities and exercises specifically designed to help people build balance and keep from falling.

Work together to create a plan for safe physical activity (what, when, where) and do it. Everyone will benefit.

Environment – What can I do to increase home safety?

Most falls happen in the home. Falls are often due to hazards that



are easy to fix – but also easy to overlook. Find and fix hazards in the home using the “Check for Safety: A Home Fall Prevention Checklist” (https://www.cdc.gov/steady/pdf/check_for_safety_brochure-a.pdf). Look at floors, stairs and steps, kitchen, bathroom and bedrooms for:

- Poorly lit rooms, hallways and stairwells;
- Broken or uneven steps or other surfaces;
- Throw rugs that can be tripped over;
- No handrails along stairs or in the bathroom;
- Broken or unstable furniture;
- Wet slippery surfaces;
- Unexpected obstacles; and
- Wires, cords and clutter.

Identify and then remove or fix all environmental hazards. Most things are simple fixes that can literally save a person's life.

Also be aware of outdoor hazards such as uneven sidewalks, curbs, and slippery streets after a rain. Make sure people have shoes fit for the activity and weather.

Education – How do I bring fall prevention into practice?

Make fall prevention a priority and learn how to recognize risks for falls and prevention steps to take. Learn to identify, remove, or fix environmental hazards, or report problems as needed. And finally make sure you and persons at risk know how to prevent falls and what to do if someone falls.

SafetyNet Fall Prevention learning tools are designed to help you educate yourself and people at risk (<http://ddssafety.net/safety/fall-prevention/training-guide-fall-prevention>).

Develop a fall prevention plan for every person identified as being at risk. Develop and implement the fall prevention plan with the person at risk and as needed, their doctor, physical therapist and others.



Make sure everyone knows what to do. Include:

- A plan for regular physical activity that fits with the person's interests and abilities;
- A plan for proper use and maintenance of assistive devices;
- An annual appointment with the person's eye doctor to review vision;
- An annual visit with the person's doctor to review medications and talk about medical conditions that increase fall risk; and,
- A plan for regular re-evaluation of personal and environmental risks.

Keep awareness high. Check for success. Meet the person at risk on a regular basis to discuss implementation of fall prevention plans. Review documentation from any falls. Talk about what worked or didn't work for the individual. Make changes to the plan as necessary.

Continue to evaluate for personal and environmental risks. With some "frequent fallers," causes of falls cannot always be identified. Instead, develop a plan of support to reduce as many risks of injury as possible.

What should I do if someone falls?

Stay calm. Be aware that the person who has fallen may be shaken or even in shock. Carefully and quickly assess the situation.

1. Listen to what the person is telling you.
2. Observe the position of the person's body and look for signs of bleeding, broken bones, or breathing problems.
3. Ask the individual what he or she is feeling.
4. Call 911 for emergency help! If a person appears to be seriously hurt, is bleeding badly, or complains of sharp pain, call 911. Do not move them.
5. Notify the person's doctor and give them details of the fall - when, where and how the person fell.
6. Document what happened – both the fall and follow-up. Keep a running log of falls to develop a history of falls. The documentation should be completed after every fall and



include:

- Previous falls - What is the person's history of falls?
- Symptoms - What happened before the fall?
- Location – Where did the person fall?
- Activity – What was the person doing at the time of the fall?
- Time – What was the date and hour of the day?
- Incident - Was there an injury? Did the person receive treatment?

Remember the 4 E's: Evaluation – Exercise – Environment – Education
 Falls can be prevented. As a supporter, you can help the people you support stay safe:

- Evaluation:
 - Evaluate for personal risk factors. Identify persons at increased risk.
 - Ensure people have vision checked annually and keep glasses updated.
 - Have a doctor or pharmacist routinely check all medications, including over the counter medications, for increased risk of falls.
- Exercise – Exercise – Exercise:
 - Promote healthy lifestyles including access to physical activity. Participation in a good balance or exercise program is key to fall prevention.
- Environment:
 - Ensure home and community safety. Conduct onsite home safety checks and make necessary changes.
- Education:
 - Make fall prevention a priority. Educate yourself and people at risk as to its importance.
 - Develop and implement individualized fall prevention plans for people at risk.





SafetyNet Resource List and Links to Other Resources

For recommendations on use and links to “You Can Prevent Falls” checklists, tip sheets, and fall prevention video for supporters, providers, and individuals, see:

Supporter Materials:

- Supporter Article: You Can Prevent Falls - <http://ddssafety.net/safety/fall-prevention/supporter-article-you-can-prevent-falls>
- Supporter Resource: Risk for Falling Checklist - <http://ddssafety.net/safety/fall-prevention/supporter-resource-risk-falling-checklist>
- Supporter Resource: What to Do if Someone Falls - <http://ddssafety.net/safety/fall-prevention/supporter-resource-what-do-if-someone-falls>
- Knowledge Check: Fall Prevention - <http://ddssafety.net/safety/fall-prevention/knowledge-check-fall-prevention>

Tools for Individuals:

- Tip Sheet #1 Check Your Risk for Falling - <http://ddssafety.net/safety/fall-prevention/tip-sheet-check-your-risk-falling>
- Tip Sheet #2 6 Steps to Keep You From Falling - <http://ddssafety.net/safety/fall-prevention/tip-sheet-6-steps-keep-you-falling>
- Tip Sheet #3 What to Do If I Fall? - <http://ddssafety.net/safety/fall-prevention/tip-sheet-what-do-if-i-fall>
- Video: You Can Keep from Falling - <http://ddssafety.net/node/983>



For additional information on fall prevention go to:

- Check for Safety: A Home Fall Prevention Checklist - https://www.cdc.gov/steady/pdf/check_for_safety_brochure-a.pdf
- Stop Falls - www.stopfalls.org
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention - Stopping Elderly Accidents, Deaths and Injuries - www.cdc.gov/steady
- Go 4 Life - www.go4life.nia.nih.gov/



Supporter Resource: Risk for Falling Checklist

Please circle "Yes" or "No" for each statement below.			Why it matters
Yes (2)	No (0)	You have fallen in the past year.	People who have fallen once are likely to fall again.
Yes (2)	No (0)	You 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 you feel unsteady when you are walking.	Unsteadiness or needing support while walking are signs of poor balance.
Yes (1)	No (0)	You steady yourself by holding onto furniture when walking at home.	This is also a sign of poor balance.
Yes (1)	No (0)	You are worried about falling.	People who are worried about falling are more likely to fall.
Yes (1)	No (0)	You need to push with your hands to stand up from a chair.	This is a sign of weak leg muscles, a major reason for falling.
Yes (1)	No (0)	You have some trouble stepping up onto a curb.	This is also a sign of weak leg muscles.
Yes (1)	No (0)	You often have to rush to the toilet.	Rushing to the bathroom, especially at night, increases your chance of falling.
Yes (1)	No (0)	You have lost some feeling in your feet.	Numbness in your feet can cause stumbles and lead to falls.
Yes (1)	No (0)	You take medicine that sometimes makes you feel light-headed or more tired than usual.	Side effects from medicines can sometimes increase your chance of falling.
Yes (1)	No (0)	You take medicine to help you sleep or improve your mood.	These medicines can sometimes increase your chance of falling.
Yes (1)	No (0)	You 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 the individual scored 4 points or more, they may be at risk for falling. Discuss this brochure with their doctor.	

This checklist was adapted from 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*; 2011:42(6) 493-499). Adapted with permission of the authors. Also available on the CDC website.



Supporter Resource —What to Do If Someone Falls

Stay calm. Be aware that the person who has fallen may be shaken or even in shock. Carefully and quickly assess the situation.

1. **Listen** to what the person is telling you.
2. **Observe** the position of the person's body and look for signs of bleeding, broken bones, or breathing problems.
3. **Ask** the individual what he or she is feeling.
4. **Call 911 for emergency help!** If a person appears to be seriously hurt, is bleeding badly, or complains of sharp pain, **call 911. Do not move them.**
5. **Notify** the person's doctor and give them details of the fall - when, where and how the person fell.
6. **Document** what happened – both the fall and follow-up. Keep a running log of falls to develop a history of falls. The documentation should be completed after every fall and include:

- **Symptoms** - What happened before the fall?
- **Location** – Where did the person fall?
- **Activity** – What was the person doing at the time of the fall?
- **Time** – What was the date and hour of the day?
- **Incident** - Was there an injury? Did the person receive treatment?

Remember the 4 E's: Evaluation – Exercise – Environment – Education

Falls can be prevented. As a supporter, you can help the people you support stay safe:

- ◆ **Evaluation**
 - Evaluate for personal risk factors. Identify persons at increased risk.
 - Ensure people have vision checked annually and keep glasses updated.
 - Have a doctor or pharmacist routinely check all medications, including over the counter medications, for increased risk of falls.
- ◆ **Exercise – Exercise – Exercise**
 - Promote healthy lifestyles including access to physical activity. Participation in a good balance or exercise program is key to fall prevention.
- ◆ **Environment**
 - Ensure home and community safety. Conduct onsite home safety checks and make necessary changes.
- ◆ **Education**
 - Make fall prevention a priority. Educate yourself and people at risk as to its importance.
 - Develop and implement individualized fall prevention plans for people at risk.



Sample Log for Falls

Symptoms What happened before the fall?	Location Where did the person fall?	Activity What was the person doing at the time of the fall?	Time What was the date and hour of the day?	Incident Was there an injury? Did the person receive treatment?



Tip Sheet: What to Do If I Fall?

If you should fall –

- Lie still for a minute.
- Stay calm.
- Check for injuries.
- If there is someone close, ask them to help.

If you are unhurt and think you can get up -

- Go slowly. Roll to your side, then push up on your elbows.
- Use your arms to push yourself on your hands and knees.
- Crawl to a sturdy chair or bed and hold on to it for support.
- Put the foot of your stronger leg flat on the floor.
- Lean forwards and push up using your arms and front leg until you are standing.
- Sit for awhile until you feel rested.

If you know you can't get up or feel severe pain if you move -

- Call 911.
- If you have a personal alarm, call for help.
- If you can't get to a phone call, YELL, make noise, bang on the floor or wall. Do whatever you can to get help.



PLAN AHEAD

- Get a mobile phone and keep it with you.
- Put phone numbers of neighbors or friends nearby, who can help you, on your phone.
- You may want to get a personal alarm and wear it.
- Practice the above steps for getting up with someone else.



Tip Sheet: Check Your Risk for Falling

Anyone can fall and get hurt. But, there are some things that make it more likely that you will fall. Take a look at this list of common fall risks. Circle **YES** or **NO** to the these questions:

- | | | |
|---|-----|----|
| 1. Have you had one or more falls in the past year? | YES | NO |
| 2. Do you take 4 or more medications each day? | YES | NO |
| 3. Do you need to hold onto furniture, cane or walker to walk safely? | YES | NO |
| 4. Do you sometimes feel dizzy when getting up from a chair or bed? | YES | NO |
| 5. Do you have poor vision? | YES | NO |
| 6. Do you have a hard time hearing? | YES | NO |
| 7. Do you have a lack of feeling in your feet? | YES | NO |
| 8. Do your feet hurt? Do you wear poorly fitted shoes? | YES | NO |
| 9. Do you have loose rugs, poor lighting, or clutter in your home? | YES | NO |
| 10. Do you feel you should get more exercise? | YES | NO |
| 11. Do you have a fear of falling? | YES | NO |
| 12. Do you sometimes have to rush to the toilet? | YES | NO |
| 13. Do you drink more than one alcoholic drink per day? | YES | NO |

The more “YES” circles you have, the more at risk you are for falls. The good news is that falls are preventable. For more information on how to prevent falls, watch the video **You Can Keep from Falling** (<http://ddssafety.net/node/983>) or **Tip Sheet: Six Steps to Keep From Falling** (<http://ddssafety.net/safety/fall-prevention/tip-sheet-6-steps-keep-you-falling>).

Adapted from Fall Prevention, StopFalls, *Napa Valley Fall Risk Screening Tool*.



Tip Sheet: 6 Steps to Keep You From Falling

Be careful! Don't fall! Most falls are preventable. Take these simple steps to stay safe and keep from falling:

1. Find a Good Exercise Program.

Do exercises that will help you to improve balance and strength. Gardening, walking, swimming, and Tai Chi are all good for you. Find an activity that you like and do it!



2. Talk to Your Doctor About Your Risks of Falling.

Share your concerns. Ask what exercises are best for you. Ask about taking Calcium and Vitamin D to keep bones strong. Ask what else you can do to stay safe.



3. Talk to Your Doctor About Medications You Take.

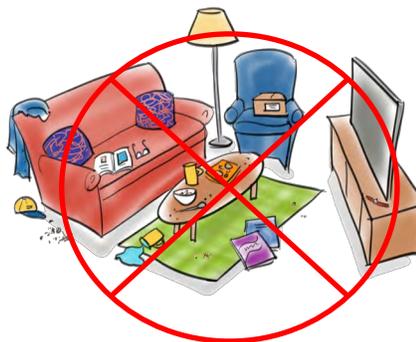
Ask about side effects that may increase your risk of falling. Make sure to ask about over-the-counter medications too.

4. Get Your Vision Checked Once a Year.

Get new eyeglasses when you need them. Get your hearing checked if you are having a hard time hearing.

5. Make Your Home Safe.

Take a look around your home. Remove clutter and things you can trip over or slip on. Make sure you have good lighting in rooms and hallways. Make stairs safe with handrails. Install grab bars in bathroom. Wear safe and comfortable shoes.



6. Talk to Supporters and Family Members.

Watch the companion video "You Can Keep from Falling" [<http://ddssafety.net/node/983>] together. Make your own fall prevention plan. Talk to others about how they can help you stay safe.