

Falling – Is Your Loved One At Risk?

There are many factors that increase the risk of falling in older adults, including mobility problems, balance disorders, chronic illnesses, and impaired vision. It's important to be proactive if your loved one is at risk for falls.

Below is a short quiz. If you answer yes to 4 or more of these questions, you may consider seeking help to reduce the risk for falling and injury.

- Is your loved one 65 years of age or older?
- Does your loved one have 3 or more medical diagnoses?
- Has your loved one fallen within the last 3 months?
- Is your loved one incontinent? (This includes the inability to make it to the bathroom or commode in a timely manner. This can include frequency, urgency, and/or nocturia.)
- Does your loved one have Visual Impairment? (Includes but is not limited to macular degeneration, diabetic retinopathies, visual field loss, age-related changes, decline in visual acuity, glare tolerance, depth perception, night vision or not wearing prescribed glasses or having the correct prescription.)
- Does your loved one have impaired functional mobility? (May include patients who need help with IADLS or ADLS, or have gait or transfer problems, arthritis, pain, fear of falling, foot problems, impaired sensation, impaired coordination, or improper use of assistive devices.)

- ✓ **Are there any environmental hazards?** (May include but is not limited to poor lighting, equipment tubing, inappropriate footwear, pets, hard-to-reach items, floor surfaces that are uneven or cluttered, or outdoor entry and exits.)
- ✓ **Is your loved one managing 4 or more prescriptions of any type?** (All PRESCRIPTIONS including prescriptions for OTC meds. Drugs highly associated with fall risk include but are not limited to sedatives, anti-depressants, tranquilizers, narcotics, anti-hypertensives, cardiac medication, corticosteroids, anti-anxiety drugs, anticholinergic drugs, and hypoglycemic drugs.)
- ✓ **Does pain affect your loved one's quality of life?** (Pain often affects an individual's desire or ability to move, or pain can be a factor in depression or compliance with safety recommendations.)
- ✓ **Does your loved one have cognitive impairment?** (Could include dementia, Alzheimer's, or stroke patients or patients who are confused, use poor judgment, have decreased comprehension, impulsivity, memory deficits.)

Falling is the leading cause of injury for people 65 and older. Fear of falling and injury can also make older adults fearful or depressed to the point that they may forego staying active and healthy.

Understanding the factors that contribute to the risk of falls – and how to get assistance – is an important way to help your loved ones remain active and independent for as long as possible.



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