

# How to Prevent Falls

## A Guide for Older Adults

### Fall Prevention Prescription:

#### ✓ **Begin a regular exercise program.**

Exercise is one of the most important things you can do to prevent falls. Exercise programs should focus on improving balance, coordination and strength.

#### ✓ **Make your home safer.**

- ✓ Remove all clutter and furniture that prevent clear walking paths
- ✓ Remove throw rugs
- ✓ Install grab bars and non-slip mats by toilets and in bathing areas
- ✓ Install handrails and lights on all staircases
- ✓ Move frequently used items to lower cabinet shelves
- ✓ Put night lights along the path from the bedroom to the bathroom
- ✓ Wear footwear with a tread
- ✓ Avoid high heels, sandals and loose slippers
- ✓ Keep outdoor pathways clear of ice, snow, and debris

#### ✓ **Have your vision checked once a year by an eye doctor.**

Medicare covers one annual eye exam per year.

#### ✓ **Review your medications with a pharmacist.**

Bring all your medications, including over-the-counter medications, to your pharmacist. Ask them about drug interactions that may cause dizziness or drowsiness, which could lead to falls.



### Spokane County Resources:

#### Exercise *\*free or low-cost classes*

Curves . . . . .	323-2211, 466-5151, 535-3359
IEL Seniors Programs* . . . . .	533-4756
SAIL Classes* . . . . .	324-1530
Senior Centers . . . . .	535-0803, 327-1584, 625-6693
Sit And Be Fit* (KSPS Ch.7, M-F 11:30-noon). . . . .	448-9438
St. Luke's Rehabilitation Institute. . . . .	838-4771
Tai Chi for Health* . . . . .	468-0587
Valley Striders*. . . . .	926-1697
YMCA* . . . . .	777-9622

#### Independent Living Assessments

Care to Stay Home . . . . .	509-340-1359
Family Home Care "Firm Footing" . . . . .	509-473-4900
Gentiva "Safe Strides" . . . . .	509-327-5857
Home Instead . . . . .	509-835-5898
Interim Health Care. . . . .	509-456-5665
Providence VNA "Better Balance" . . . . .	509-534-4300
Senior Helpers. . . . .	509-922-4333
Specialty Homecare Lifeline . . . . .	509-473-9956

#### Home Safety

Elder Services . . . . .	509-458-7450
Lilac Blind Association. . . . .	509-328-9116
Rebuilding Together Spokane . . . . .	509-536-1696
SNAP . . . . .	509-456-7111 x 200

#### Free Print Materials

Prevent Falls at Home manual . . . . .	509-473-9956
Toolkit to Prevent Falls . . . . .	(800) 232-4636
WA Department of Health . . . . .	(800) 525-0127

#### Additional Resources

211: Local referral assistance (8a-5p M-F). . . . .	211
American Seating & Mobility . . . . .	(877) 339-1234
East Region EMS Injury Prevention. . . . .	509-326-6499
RSVP-Retired Senior Volunteer Program. . . . .	509-344-7787
Spokane County Library District . . . . .	509-893-8200
Spokane Public Libraries . . . . .	509-444-5300
State Health Insurance Benefits Advisor. . . . .	(800) 562-6900
Vibrant USA, Medicare Insurance Specialist. . . . .	(866) 733-5111

#### Free Medication Review

Bates Pharmacy . . . . .	509-489-4500
WA Poison Center. . . . .	(800) 222-1222

- Call your insurance provider to see if you qualify for home safety equipment and fall prevention exercise resources.
- Entities, products, and services listed here are actively involved with the Fall Free Spokane Coalition; their inclusion is not intended to endorse, recommend, or favor any commercial products or services offered.

**Fall Free Spokane would like to remind you that...**

**Many falls are preventable!**

**Use this tool to learn what you can do to stay active, independent and fall-free!**

Check 'YES' if you experience this even once	YES	NO	What to do if checked 'YES'
Have you had any falls in the last six months?			People who have fallen before are more likely to fall again. Take action to reduce your risk. <b><i>Talk to your doctor(s) about your fall concerns.</i></b>
Do you take four or more prescriptions or over the counter medications daily?  Has it been more than a year since your last medication review?			<b><i>Review your medications with your doctor(s) and pharmacists</i></b> at each visit and with any new prescriptions. Do a full medication review every year with a pharmacist or doctor. Ask which medications can cause drowsiness, dizziness or weakness as a side effect.
Do you have difficulty walking or standing without the use of a cane / walker or furniture / wall?			<b><i>Talk to your doctor(s) about your fall concerns.</i></b> Ask if a physical therapist or treatment by a specialist would be helpful to your problem.
Has it been more than two years since your last eye exam?  Hearing exam?			<b><i>Schedule an eye exam and hearing test</i></b> every two years to protect your eyesight, hearing and balance.
Do you require assistance with daily activities, such as taking medication, bathing, dressing, or cooking?			Arm and leg weakness can make it harder for you to navigate your environment. You can build muscle strength by <b><i>exercising regularly</i></b> . <b><i>See resources on back.</i></b>
Do you have a fear of falling?			Fear of falling can be helpful if it causes you to take reasonable precautions, but it can be harmful when it causes you to avoid exercise or other daily activities. Start slowly and build your confidence in exercise and daily activities. Start with chair exercise and the move up. <b><i>See resources on back.</i></b>
Are you eating less than 2 balanced meals and drinking less than 4 glasses of water a day?			Get plenty of rest, proper nutrition and hydration - these factors can affect your risk for a fall.

*Tool modified from the My Falls Free Plan, Washington State Department of Health*

**The more 'Yes' answers you have, the greater your chance of having a fall.**

**Take steps to reduce your risk to stay independent and fall-free!**

**For more information about fall prevention resources call 509-324-1530**