

# How to Prevent Falls

## A Guide for Older Adults

### Fall Prevention Prescription:

#### ✓ Increase your balance and mobility.

- ◆ Activities requiring moderate effort are safe for most people. However, if you have conditions such as heart disease, arthritis or diabetes, talk to your doctor about the types and amount of exercise that's right for you.
- ◆ Learn targeted balance and mobility exercises. Ask your doctor, go to a class or check online.
- ◆ Start an exercise program to improve your balance and stay with it! Find an activity you enjoy: walking, dancing, group fitness, etc. Choose a time and a location that work for you: exercise at home, at a gym, or join a community or senior center class.
- ◆ Consider finding a partner: it's more fun and you can keep each other motivated!
- ◆ Remember, it's never too late to start or re-start exercising!

#### ✓ Review your medications with your pharmacist at least once a year.

Bring a list of all medications, including over the counter drugs and supplements. Ask if any could cause dizziness or drowsiness, which can increase your risk of falling.

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

Medicare and most insurance plans cover one eye exam per year. Vision issues could increase your risk of falling.

#### ✓ Make your home safer.

- ◆ Remove throw rugs and clutter to create clear walking paths.
- ◆ Install grab bars and non-slip mats by toilets and in bathing areas.
- ◆ Put night lights along the path from the bedroom to the bathroom.
- ◆ Wear footwear with a tread.

### Spokane County Resources:

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

IEL Seniors Programs*	533-4756
Corbin Senior Center.....	327-1584
East Central Community Center.....	625-6699
Hillyard Senior Center.....	482-0803
Mid-City Concerns .....	624-0378
Sinto Senior Center.....	327-2861
South Side Senior Center .....	535-0803
Spokane Valley Senior Center.....	926-1937
Sit And Be Fit* (KSPS Ch.7, M-F 11:30-noon).....	448-9438
Tai Chi for Health* .....	468-0587
Valley Striders* .....	926-1697
YMCA* .....	777-9622

#### Free Medication Review

Ask your pharmacist or physician for a free medication review.  
WA Poison Center.....(800) 222-1222

#### Home Safety

Elder Services.....	509-458-7450
Lilac Blind Association.....	509-328-9116
SNAP.....	509-456-7111 x 200

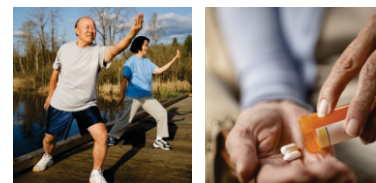
#### Independent Living Assessments

Care to Stay Home.....	509-340-1359
Gentiva "Safe Strides" .....	509-473-4900
Good Samaritan Society.....	509-340-3155
Orchard Crest.....	509-928-2222
Pine Ridge Alzheimer's Care Center.....	509-924-4388
Providence VNA "Better Balance".....	509-534-4300
Senior Helpers.....	509-922-4333
Specialty Homecare Lifeline.....	509-473-9956

#### Additional Resources

211: Local referral assistance (8a-5p M-F).....	211
Aging & Long Term Care of Ea WA.....	509-458-2509
American Seating & Mobility.....	877-339-1234
RSVP-Retired Senior Volunteer Program.....	509-344-7787
St. Luke's Rehabilitation Institute.....	838-4771
Statewide Health Insurance Benefits Advisors...	800-562-6900

- 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 and 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**