



# Preventing falls

You came to the emergency department after a fall. You have been checked and are safe to go home. This sheet explains why falls happen and simple steps to lower your risk of falling again.

## What is it?

Falls are common, especially as we get older, and one fall makes another more likely. Common causes include weak legs, poor balance, eyesight problems, dizziness when standing, some medicines, foot problems, and hazards at home such as rugs, clutter and poor lighting. Many falls can be prevented.

## Looking after yourself at home

- Remove loose rugs, cables and clutter from floors, and keep walkways clear.
- Use bright lights, and a night light on the way to the toilet.
- Fit grab rails in the bathroom and beside steps, and use a non-slip bath mat.
- Wear well-fitting, flat shoes with a good grip; avoid loose slippers.
- Stand up slowly, and sit on the edge of the bed for a moment before walking.
- Keep active: regular walking and balance exercises make your legs stronger.
- Keep a phone within reach, and tell someone if you live alone.

## Medicines

- Ask your doctor or pharmacist to review all your medicines; some can cause dizziness or drowsiness.
- Avoid alcohol with sleeping tablets or strong painkillers.

## Follow-up

- See your family doctor or health centre within 1 to 2 weeks for a falls check.
- Ask about a balance and strength programme or physiotherapy.
- Have your eyes and feet checked, and ask your doctor about bone health.

## Come back to the emergency department or call an ambulance straight away if:

- A headache that gets worse, repeated vomiting, or new drowsiness after hitting your head
- New confusion or a change in behaviour
- Being unable to stand or put weight on a leg
- Fainting or blacking out, especially without warning
- New weakness, numbness, or slurred speech
- Bleeding that will not stop, especially if you take blood thinners



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This leaflet is general information to support the advice your doctor or nurse gave you today. It does not replace their advice. If you are worried, seek medical help.

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