



**Avoiding falls starts with you.**

There are four major steps to avoid falls which are:

- 1) Talking to your doctor about the medications you are taking which may increase your risk for falling.
- 2) Having your eyes checked at least every two years or when you notice a change.
- 3) Staying active:
  - If you already have an exercise routine, keep it up.
  - If you don't have a regular exercise routine, talk to your doctor about starting one.
  - Focus on flexibility and balance.
- 4) Check your home for hazards that may cause you to fall.

Each year, one out of every three people over 65 will fall, often at home. Staying active is a very important step to lower your risk for falls.

For more on fall proofing your home, go to **CDC.gov** and type "home safety checklist" in the search box.

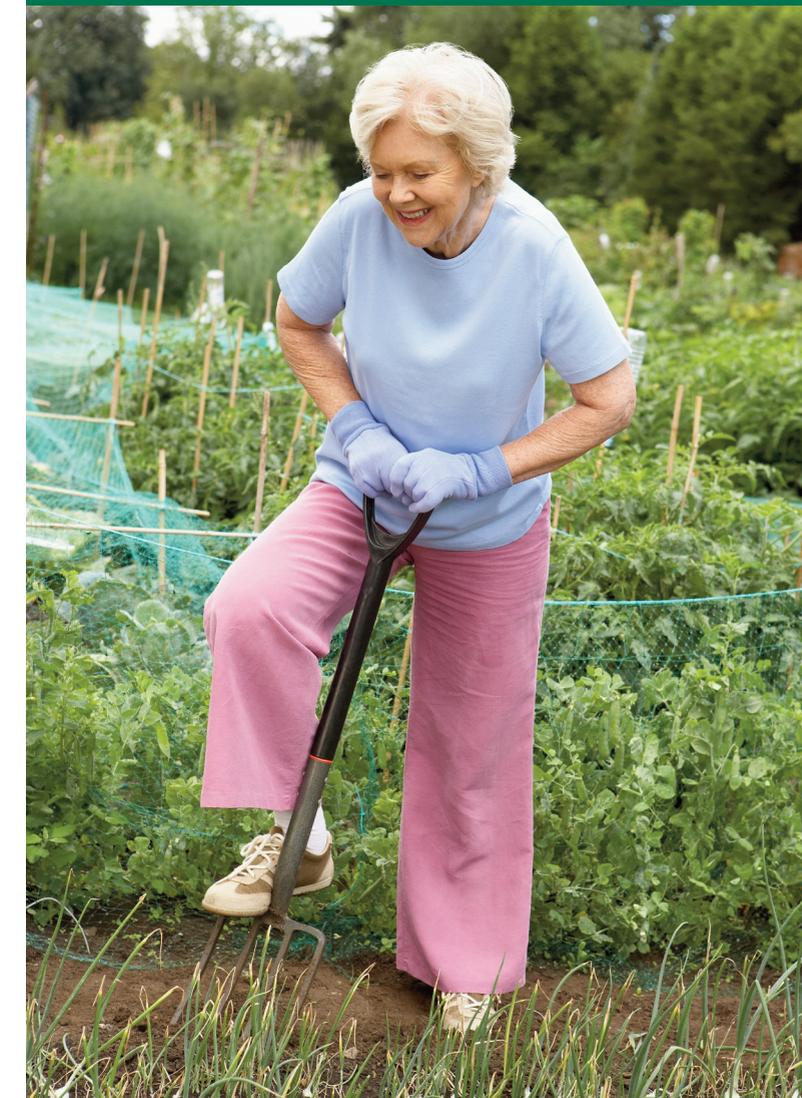
Christiana Care experts are here to speak to senior groups on avoiding falls.

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# You can avoid falls



Safety tips you can use to avoid falls.



## Falls are a major cause of injury, disability and death.



### Are you safe at home?

Here's a check list that will help you find ways to avoid falls.

Make a plan to fix any fall risks in your home.

#### Front/Rear And Garage Entry

- Do you need help to get in or out of your home?
- Are there steps that don't have railings?
- Are the sidewalks not equal?
- Are the light switches out of your reach?
- Do the inside doors swing out over the steps?
- Are shrubs growing too close to the way in?

#### Stairways

- Are there shoes, toys or other objects on the steps?
- Are full length handrails missing or broken?
- Are treads, risers and carpeting loose, broken or slippery?
- Is a light switch missing from the top or the bottom of the stairs?

#### Living Room/Family Room

- Are floor coverings hard to walk over?
- Are thresholds not equal?
- Are the doors too narrow or blocked in some way?
- Do you have trouble using door handles and knobs?
- Are you unable to open the windows?
- Is your furniture set up in a way that makes it hard to move around?
- Do you need help to get up from your chair?
- Does your furniture slip on the floor?

#### Kitchen

- Is it hard for you to open and close the oven?
- Are dishes and food hard to reach?
- Is the counter too high for you?
- Is the counter too cluttered to use?
- Is it hard to reach the sink and faucets?
- Is the table too cluttered or hard to reach?
- Do you need help to open the refrigerator?
- Can food be placed into smaller lighter containers to make it easy to use?

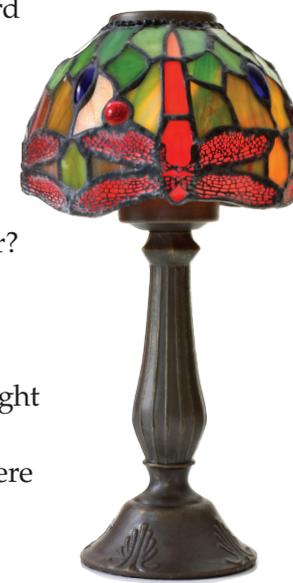


#### Bathroom

- Is the door too narrow, blocked or otherwise hard to get through?
- Is there too little space to get on or off the toilet?
- Is the toilet too high or too low?
- Is it hard to access the sink and faucet?
- Is the mirror too high or too low?
- Is there too little room to get in or out of the tub?
- Are grab bars missing?
- Is the shower floor slippery?
- Is it too hard to stand long enough to take a shower?

#### Bedroom

- Is the door too narrow, blocked or otherwise hard to get through?
- Is it too crowded to move around the bed?
- Does the furniture make it hard to move around your room?
- Is it hard to access the closet?
- Is it hard to use the drawers?
- Is it hard to get into or out of your bed safely?
- Does the bed slide on the floor?
- Is there a clear, lit path from your bed to your toilet in the middle of the night?
- Can you reach a lamp or flashlight while in bed?
- Is there a sturdy armchair where you can sit to dress?



#### General Tips

- Think about a personal emergency response system or cell phone.
- Keep important phone numbers close to all phones and a phone close to your bed.
- Be sure all halls and stairs are brightly lit.
- Get rid of boxes, stacks of magazines, toys and other clutter.

- Get rid of area rugs. Tack down loose carpet.
- Use non-skid backing on all area rugs, along with bathroom rugs.
- Apply yellow safety tape to the edges of steps and doorways so they are easier to see.
- Put in night lights or motion detector lights in most often used areas (hallways, stairways, bathrooms, bedrooms).
- Keep electrical and phone cords out of walkways.
- Check with a professional before buying medical equipment.
- Think about placing a bell on your pet collars so you can hear them if they are under foot.
- Clean eyeglasses daily and replace hearing aid batteries.
- Wear pants instead of long robes and dresses you might trip over.
- Choose sturdy, low shoes with non-skid soles.
- Pick Velcro closures instead of laces you might trip over.
- Use a laundry bag with a strap instead of a clothes basket.



## Building in safety

- 1) Have a professional put in a ramp to your home. A single step should have a grab bar for support.
- 2) Place a railing on both sides of stairways.
- 3) Think about changing round door knobs to level handles.
- 4) Place often used items within easy reach.
- 5) Never stand on a chair to reach a high object.