



PREVENTING FALLS AND FRACTURES



Many things can cause a fall. The good news is that you can prevent most falls. Falls are NOT a normal part of aging.

Take the Right Steps

If you take care of your overall health, you may be able to lower your chances of falling.

- **Stay physically active.** Regular exercise—including walking or climbing stairs—improves muscles and makes you stronger.
- **Get your eyes and hearing checked regularly.** Always wear your glasses and hearing aid, if needed.
- **Learn side effects of any medicine you take.** If a drug makes you sleepy or dizzy, tell your doctor or pharmacist.
- **Get enough sleep.** If you are sleepy, you are more likely to fall.
- **Limit the amount of alcohol you drink.**
- **Stand up slowly.** Getting up too quickly can cause your blood pressure to drop.
- **Use a walking stick if you need help** feeling steady. If your doctor tells you to use a cane or walker, make sure it is the right size for you and the wheels roll smoothly.
- **Be very careful when walking on wet or icy surfaces.**
- **Wear proper shoes**—non-skid, rubber-soled, low-heeled shoes, or lace-up shoes with non-skid soles that fully support your feet.

Always tell your doctor if you fell since your last checkup—even if you didn't get hurt.

Your Own Medical Alarm

Consider a home-monitoring system. Usually, you wear a button on a chain around your neck. If you fall or need emergency help, you push the button to alert the service. You can find local "medical alarm" services in your yellow pages. Most medical insurance companies and Medicare do not cover home-monitoring systems. Be sure to ask about costs.

*Is information on this flyer incorrect or outdated? If so, please report it to (919) 542-4512.

Make Your Home Safe

In Stairways, Hallways, and Pathways

- Have handrails on both sides of the stairs, and make sure they are tightly fastened. Hold the handrails when you use the stairs, going up or down.
- Make sure there is good lighting.
- Keep areas where you walk tidy and clear of obstruction.
- Make sure all carpets are fixed firmly to the floor—don't use throw rugs or small area rugs.

In Bathrooms

- Mount grab bars at toilets and on both the inside and outside of your tub.
- Place non-skid mats or strips on all surfaces that may get wet.
- Remember to turn on night lights.

In Your Bedroom

- Put night lights and light switches close to your bed.
- Keep your telephone near your bed.

In Other Living Areas

- Keep electric cords and wires near walls and away from walking paths.
- Tack down all carpets and large area rugs firmly to the floor.
- Arrange your furniture (especially low coffee tables) and other objects so they are not in your way when you walk.
- Make sure your sofas and chairs are the right height for you.
- Keep items you use often within easy reach.
- Don't stand on a chair or table to reach something that's too high—use a “reach stick” (grabbing tool) instead or ask for help.
- Don't let your cat or dog trip you. Know where your pet is.
- Keep emergency numbers in large print near each telephone.

The Chatham County Council on Aging offers the *A Matter of Balance* (falls prevention) class, assistive equipment and minor home modification & repair.

Contact Council's Eastern Center at 919-542-4512 or the Western Center at 919-742-3975 for information about these and other services that may help make you and home safer.

Chatham County Council on Aging Website: <https://chathamcouncilonaging.org/>

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