

## Four things you can do to prevent falls:

- 1 Improve your balance and strength – ask your doctor or nurse to recommend a programme or exercises that are right for you.
- 2 Ask your doctor, nurse or pharmacist to review your medicines
- 3 Get annual eye check-ups and update your glasses
- 4 Make your home safer by:
  - ✓ Removing clutter and tripping hazards, including mats and rugs
  - ✓ Putting railings on stairs and adding grab bars in the bathroom and toilet
  - ✓ Having good lighting, especially on stairs

Contact your doctor, nurse or local support agencies for information on exercises or programmes in your area.

Local programmes:

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For more information on falls prevention, please visit:

[www.acc.co.nz/olderfalls](http://www.acc.co.nz/olderfalls)



This resource was developed by bpac<sup>nz</sup> for the Health Quality and Safety Commission, based on the "STEADI" falls campaign by the US Centres for Diseases Control and Prevention (CDC).

# STAY independent



## Are you at risk of falling?

Complete the checklist inside



HEALTH QUALITY & SAFETY  
COMMISSION NEW ZEALAND  
*Kupu Taurangi Hauora o Aotearoa*



## Check Your Risk of Falling

Please circle "Yes" or "No" for each statement below			Why it matters
I have slipped, tripped or fallen in the last year.	Yes	No	People who have fallen once are more likely to fall again
I need to push with my hands to stand up from a chair.	Yes	No	This is a sign of weak leg muscles which can be a major reason for falling.
I am worried about falling.	Yes	No	People who are worried about falling are more likely to fall.
Sometimes I feel unsteady when walking, or have been told to use a walking stick to help get myself around safely.	Yes	No	Unsteadiness, or needing support while walking, are signs you may have poor balance.
I steady myself by holding onto furniture when walking at home.	Yes	No	This is also a sign you may have poor balance.
I have lost some feeling in my feet.	Yes	No	Numbness in your feet can cause stumbles and lead to falls.
I take medicine that sometimes makes me feel sleepy, feel light-headed, dizzy or more drowsy than usual. (sleeping pills, blood pressure pills etc.)	Yes	No	Side effects from medicines can sometimes increase your chance of falling.
I often feel sad or depressed.	Yes	No	Symptoms of depression, such as feeling sad or unmotivated, have been linked to falls.
It has been more than two years since I had my eyes checked	Yes	No	Your eyes can change as you age, your glasses may need to as well.
I sometimes have to rush to the toilet.	Yes	No	Rushing to the bathroom, especially at night, increases your chance of falling.

If you answer **yes** to one or more questions, you could be at risk of falling. Discuss your answers with your health practitioner.

## Your health practitioner may suggest:

- Seeing a physiotherapist to check your strength and balance
- Attending a fall prevention programme or exercise class
- Seeing a podiatrist about your feet
- Changing your medicines, particularly if some make you light-headed or drowsy
- Having medical tests, such as testing if your blood pressure drops when you stand up
- Having your eyesight checked annually.

**These are all positive steps towards preventing falls and helping keep you independent.**