

Tips on preventing falls at home

VIDEO	AUDIO
	Mayo Clinic emergency departments see patients every day who've been injured by falls.
Neha Raukar, M.D. Emergency Medicine Mayo Clinic	"You can see things as simple as little cuts, and bumps and bruises, to broken bones to big head injuries, where you're bleeding into your brain. There's a variety of injuries that can occur."
	Many of those falls happen at home, and here are just a few easy things you can do to prevent them. It starts with reviewing any medications you're taking with your health care team.
	"Every time somebody gets a medication, try to know what the side effects are, especially if they affect your balance or your ability to be awake."
	Be informed about any medical conditions that could make you more prone to falls.
	"Things like diabetes can cause neuropathy, where you can't really feel your feet. And then, so if you can't feel your feet and you're walking around, you can't really tell if your surface is uneven."
	Other tips inside the house: Wear sensible shoes instead of slippery socks, high heels or flip-flops.
	Remove clutter and tripping hazards from high-traffic areas.
	Secure loose rugs with tape or nonslip backing.
	Keep your home brightly lit, and place a night light in bedrooms, bathrooms and hallways.
	Use an assistive device, such as a walker or cane, if needed.
	And if you have pets, be aware that they might be at your feet.
	"We not infrequently see people who trip over their dog or their cat as they're trying to scurry out of the way."

	Stay physically active to avoid future falls. Gentle exercise, like walking or tai chi, improves strength, balance, coordination and flexibility.
	And report all your falls to your health care team, even if they seem trivial.
	"Sometimes it means something more is happening that needs to be investigated."
	For the Mayo Clinic News Network, I'm Jason Howland.