

Mobility Falls Prevention Self-Management Plan

- Follow your medical providers' guidance regarding exercise, particularly strength and balance exercises.
- Ask your doctor or pharmacist to review your prescriptions and over-the-counter medications.
- Have your eyes checked every year.
- Wear supportive footwear when walking inside and outside of your home.
- Remove tripping hazards (e.g., clutter, scatter rugs, extension cords).
- Add grab bars and railings, if needed.
- Take Vitamin D (800 IU daily, unless otherwise directed).
- Get screened and, if needed, treated for osteoporosis.
- Use a walking stick or other device for balance.

Green Flags—All Clear



If you:

- Have no falls and no concerns about falling.
- Feel steady when walking.
- Have an environment free of trip hazards.
- Exercise regularly to maintain your strength and balance.
- Use assistive device(s) recommended by your doctor or physical therapist.

What this means ...

- Good work!

Keep up the great work!

Yellow Flags—Caution



If you:

- Have problems taking your medications as prescribed (e.g., missed doses, difficulty understanding directions, or medications cause dizziness, fatigue, weakness, imbalance or fogged thinking).
- Have lightheadedness when you stand up.
- Have reduced muscle strength in your legs.
- Have painful or unstable ankles, knees, or hips.
- Have decreased sensation in your legs or feet.
- Have blurred vision.
- Have clutter or other trip hazards in your home.
- Have a history of falls of any type.
- Have a diagnosis of osteoporosis.
- Have difficulty walking.
- Have balance problems when walking.
- Are unable to get up from the floor without help.

What this means ...

- You are at a higher risk for falls.
- Your medications may need to be adjusted.
- You may need an eye exam.
- You may need to see a physical therapist.
- You may benefit from a home safety and fall risk assessment/evaluation.

Call your health care provider if symptoms do not improve.

Name:

Number:

Instructions:

If you notice a Yellow Flag, work closely with your health care team.

Red Flags—Stop and Think



If you:

- Have extreme dizziness or loss of consciousness.
- Had a fall and have difficulty standing, moving a limb, or cannot bear weight.
- Had a fall and have trouble thinking clearly or staying awake.
- Had a head injury or trauma from a fall.

What this means ...

- You need to be evaluated by a health care professional immediately.

If possible, notify your health care provider's office.

Name:

Number:

Follow these instructions: CALL 9-1-1

If you notice a Red Flag, CALL 9-1-1. Emergency!

Mobility Falls Prevention

Fast Facts

Becoming an Age-Friendly Health System provides a set of four evidence-based elements of high-quality care, known as the “4Ms,” to all older adults. The 4Ms represent a broad shift by health systems to focus on the needs of older adults. The 4 Ms are Medications, Mentation, Mobility, and What Matters.

fall (/fɒl/) *n* 1 an event which results in a person coming to rest inadvertently on the ground or other lower level.

- Stay physically active to decrease risk. Falls are not inevitable.
- A fall is defined as unintentionally coming to rest on the ground, floor, or other lower level from a standing, sitting, or horizontal position in a movement **not** caused by a seizure, stroke, fainting, motor vehicle accident, or risky behavior.
- Each year, one of every three adults aged 64+ falls.
- Falls can cause moderate to severe injuries, such as hip fractures and head injuries, and can increase the risk of early death.
- 20%–30% of people who fall suffer moderate to severe injuries, such as lacerations, hip fractures, or head traumas.
- Falls are the most common cause of traumatic brain injuries.
- Most fractures among older people are caused by falls. The most common are fractures of the spine, hip, forearm, leg, ankle, pelvis, upper arm, and hand.
- Many people who fall, even if not injured, develop a fear of falling. This fear may limit their activities, which leads to reduced mobility and loss of physical fitness. In turn, this increases the risk of falling.

Three common areas to assess for falls prevention:

1. **Environmental risks factors:** Trip hazards, loose carpet or throw rugs, extension cords, ill-fitting or inappropriately soled footwear, poor lighting, excessive bed height or inappropriate seating, lack of grab bars in bathrooms, poorly fitting or incorrect eyewear, wet or slippery floors, pets, uneven surfaces, cracks and abrupt edges in sidewalks and driveways, and icy or slippery sidewalks.
2. **Behavioral risks factors:** Lack of exercise, over exertion, not getting proper rest, drinking alcohol, and poor dietary intake.
3. **Medical risk factors:** Parkinson’s disease, Alzheimer’s disease, depression, diabetes, osteoporosis (weakened bone density), and arthritis (pain, stiffness, difficult grip, loss of balance), infections, urinary incontinence, impaired mental capacity, confusion, foot problems, taking certain medications, reactions when changing prescriptions, adverse effects from some combinations of drugs.

What can you do?

- Have a fall risk assessment.
- Exercise regularly.
- Use any equipment (e.g. cane or walker regularly and safely).

Aging and Disability Services

Aging and Disability Services (ADS)—the Area Agency on Aging for King County—plans, coordinates, and advocates for comprehensive services for older adults, family caregivers, and people with disabilities throughout Seattle and King County. For information about services or interpretation assistance, call 844-348-5464 or e-mail

info@communitylivingconnections.org.



Aging and Disability Services
700 Fifth Avenue, 51st Floor • PO Box 34215
Seattle, WA 98124-4215
Tel. 206-684-0660 • TTY: 206-684-0702
aginginfo@seattle.gov