

Help prevent falls



Having diabetes may affect your balance. This can raise your chances for falling.

Diabetes may also damage the nerves and reduce the blood flow in your feet. This can make it harder for you to feel things with your feet and toes.

Know the risks

First, it is important to know if you are at risk for falling. Studies show that you are more likely than others to fall if you have any of the following risk factors.

Place a check mark next to any that apply to you:

- Have weak muscles, such as those in your legs
- Have balance problems or have trouble staying steady while walking
- Have fallen before
- Have symptoms of low blood sugar
- Take many medicines, especially medicines that can cause dizziness or sleepiness



The more boxes you checked, the more likely you may be to fall. Talk with your healthcare provider about ways to reduce your chances for falling.



Tips to help protect yourself from falls

In addition to knowing the risks of falling, you can help protect yourself by making your home safer.

If you need to make your home safer, ask a family member or a friend to help.

Here are some tips to consider. Place a check mark next to the steps you will take:

At home

- Put nightlights in your halls, bathroom, bedroom, stairways, and kitchen to help you see better.
- Keep floors clear of things you may trip over, such as throw rugs and cords.
- Put handrails by your stairs and toilet and in your bathtub or shower.
- Keep commonly used items handy so you will not need a stepstool.
- Use slip-proof mats in the bathtub and on shower floors.
- Clean and straighten up your house during the daytime when you can see better so that you don't trip.

Foot care

- Wear shoes with firm soles that are comfortable and cover all parts of your feet.
- Try not to wear shoes that are hard to walk in, such as high heels.
- Check your feet daily and wash them each day in warm (not hot) water.

Health care

- Wear eyeglasses or contact lenses with the right prescription.
- Get your eyes and hearing checked as often as your healthcare provider suggests.

Other

- Stand up slowly so you won't feel dizzy.
- Limit how much alcohol you drink. Alcohol can affect your balance.

Notes

You can also ask your healthcare provider for more ways to reduce your risk of falling.

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- _____
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To learn about more ways you can help prevent falls, visit the American Diabetes Association website at www.diabetes.org. For more information, call **1-800-DIABETES** (1-800-342-2383).