**The 5 Biggest Causes of Falls for Seniors**

**Are You at Risk? The 5 Biggest Causes of Seniors Falling**

Do you fear falling? Do you believe your loved one is at risk of falling and don't know what to do? We're here to help you. *(How many of you have a healthy fear of falling?)*

Your fear of falling is well grounded. A dazzling 1 in 4 seniors will fall this year. A full 2.4 million seniors will be treated in emergency rooms for head injuries, hip fractures and broken bones due to falls in one year alone!

The worst part is, that once someone has fallen, they often limit their activity and suffer from further mental and physical decline, accelerating dependency and isolation.

So, we're here to help you identify the most common causes of falling and discuss how you can address some of those risks.

**5 Causes of Seniors Falling**

*1. Environment*

The environment you live in is the #1 cause of falling. Many seniors live in homes that are no longer ideal for the elderly. Examples of dangerous environments for seniors include poorly lit hallways, slippery bathtubs, high mattresses, steep stairs, clutter, etc... *(Checklists on MyBalanceUniversity.com on how to “fall proof” your home.)*

**Solution:** [Do a safety assessment of the home](https://www.ncoa.org/blog/falls-prevention-home-18-step-safety-checklist/). Specifically, see if you can add lighting, tackiness to bathtub and shower floors, grab bars in bathrooms, railings in stairways, remove area and throw rugs, get proper footwear without raised heals.

*2. Health Conditions*

According to the National Council on Aging, 90% of seniors suffer from at least one chronic health condition like heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes or arthritis. *(Does not include neurological diseases)* Each of the conditions can increase your risk of falling either due to a sudden loss of control as in the case of standing up too quickly with high blood pressure, or inability to control ones muscles well as in the case of holding on to a grab bar with arthritis.

**Solution:** Understand the potential risks of your condition, and which circumstances and environments presents the most risk of causing a fall. Sometimes, it's simply unavoidable. In that case you might want to [compare medical alert systems](https://www.seniorsafetyreviews.com/best-medical-alert-systems/), and get one that suits your individual needs, lifestyle and budget best.

*3. Vision (Remember the challenge our assessments become when we close our eyes)*

Seniors often suffer from declining vision at a rapid pace. Whether it's macular degeneration, glaucoma, cataract or diabetic retinopathy, loss of vision makes it harder for seniors to see tripping obstacles, contrasting edges and changes in height and depth. *(I strongly encourage everyone to get an eye/ear exam once per year.)*

**Solution:** Get your vision checked every year. Make sure prescriptions are current and that eye glasses are readily available. Be extra careful with bifocals on stairs and tint changing glasses in changing light conditions.

*4. Muscle Weakness & Balance*

Aging contributes to declining muscle strength, coordination and flexibility - all of which contributes to an increased risk of falling. This is especially true if you are relatively sedentary. But it doesn't have to be that way. There are a ton of things you can do to improve your physical well being, no matter your current condition.

**Solution:** Keep in shape! Stay fit by walking, exercising, or playing sports. You can also do specific [exercises to improve your strength and balance](https://www.seniorsafetyreviews.com/tips/5-best-exercises-recommended-senior-health-strength-balance/).

*5. Medication Use*

While many medications are absolutely necessary, some can cause drowsiness, dizziness or confusion. Moreover, some drugs when mixed with other medications or foods can cause similar symptoms. Take the correct medications at the right times is also an issue that can cause unintended side effects.

**Solution:** If you feel any type of drowsiness or dizziness on your medications, discuss your symptoms with your doctor and review potential solutions. Furthermore, discuss known side effects of your medications before taking them, so you understand what you can, or cannot, do while on them. Lastly, to help you take the right medications, in the right dosages at the right time consider [medication reminders](https://www.seniorsafetyreviews.com/reviews/best-medication-reminders/).

**Conclusion**

While falling will always remain a key risk to healthy aging, there are many ways to significantly reduce the chance of a fall that are within your control. Learn the most common causes of falling so you can address those risks in your environment and stay on your feet where you belong!

SOURCE: <https://www.seniorsafetyreviews.com/5-biggest-causes-seniors-falling/>

**7 Causes of Falls in the Elderly** *(Here’s another study telling us what the leading causes for Falls in Seniors)*

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Falls are the leading cause of death, injury and hospital admissions among the elderly population. According to a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [**report**](http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm6927a5), one out of every four Americans aged 65 and older falls each year.

Not only are seniors more prone to falling, but they are also more susceptible to injury. Of the nearly 36 million falls that happen annually among this age group, more than 8 million of these result in fall-related injuries like a broken hip or head trauma. Understanding why older individuals are at increased risk can help family caregivers take the proper precautions to keep their loved ones safely on their feet.

**Why Do Elderly People Fall?**

Several factors contribute to senior falls. Keep in mind that it is common for older adults to have one or more of the following risk factors.

1. **Declines in Physical Fitness**

Many adults become less active as they get older, which exacerbates the physical effects of aging. Failure to engage in even mild exercise on a regular basis results in reduced muscle mass and strength (sarcopenia), decreased bone mass, [**poor balance**](https://www.agingcare.com/articles/balance-exercises-for-seniors-151016.htm) and coordination, and reduced flexibility. Not only does overall deconditioning increase a senior’s risk of falling, but it also increases the likelihood that they will incur a serious injury and experience a longer, more difficult recovery.

1. **Impaired Vision**

Age-related eye diseases make it difficult, if not impossible, to detect fall hazards, such as steps, puddles and thresholds. Even if a senior is in top physical condition, failing to see and accurately perceive obstacles or changes in ground level can lead to a nasty tumble. Refusing to follow physician recommendations for treatment, including wearing eyeglasses and using necessary [**low vision equipment**](https://www.agingcare.com/articles/making-life-easier-for-older-adults-with-low-vision-177792.htm) can contribute to falls as well.

1. **Medication Side Effects**

A wide variety of [**medications**](https://www.agingcare.com/articles/medications-increase-fall-risk-in-older-adults-171464.htm) increase a senior’s fall risk. Side-effects, such as drowsiness, dizziness and low blood pressure, can all contribute to an accident. Sedatives, antidepressants, antipsychotics, opioids and some cardiovascular drugs are the most common culprits. A [**study**](https://dx.doi.org/10.1093/gerona/glv013) of polypharmacy in older adults found that 39 percent of this age group takes five or more prescription medications. Polypharmacy increases the risk of adverse drug reactions and drug-related falls. Keep in mind that over-the-counter medications and dietary supplements can have powerful side effects and synergistic effects, too.

1. **Chronic Diseases**

Health conditions like [**Parkinson’s disease**](https://www.agingcare.com/articles/what-is-parkinsons-disease-95741.htm), [**Alzheimer’s disease**](https://www.agingcare.com/articles/alzheimers-disease-signs-symptoms-treatments-95734.htm) and [**arthritis**](https://www.agingcare.com/articles/arthritis-warning-signs-and-types-of-arthritis-102878.htm) that affect balance, physical strength, joint integrity and/or cognitive function contribute to falls. Poor physical health increases a person’s initial risk of falling and minimizes their ability to respond to hazards and recover from accidents, like tripping or slipping. Peripheral neuropathy, or nerve damage, can cause numbness in the feet, making it very difficult for a senior to sense environmental hazards and get around safely.

1. **Surgical Procedures**

[**Hip replacements**](https://www.agingcare.com/articles/hip-replacement-how-to-prepare-and-what-to-expect-122738.htm) and other surgeries can leave an elderly person weak, in pain and discomfort, and less mobile than they were before the procedure. This might be temporary while a patient heals or become a new and lasting problem. [**Senior rehabilitation**](https://www.agingcare.com/articles/elderly-parent-inpatient-rehabilitation-138342.htm) is crucial for helping older adults recuperate quickly and recover as much of their physical, cognitive and functional ability as possible.

1. **Environmental Hazards**

The majority of falls occur in or around seniors’ homes. Environmental factors, such as poor lighting, clutter, areas of disrepair, loose carpets, slick floors and lack of safety equipment (e.g., grab bars, ramps, lifts), can jeopardize a senior’s safety. In many cases, unsafe living conditions ultimately lead to accidents and falls that prevent older adults from the ability to [**age in place**](https://www.agingcare.com/articles/expert-advice-on-aging-in-place-426721.htm).

1. **Behavioral Hazards**

A person’s fall risk is also influenced by their unique lifestyle and behaviors. This includes the types of activities they engage in, the level of physical demand these activities require, and their willingness and ability to adapt their routine for enhanced safety. For example, laundry is a normal daily activity for many people, but it can involve a great deal of exertion for a senior, especially if they must carry a heavy laundry basket throughout their home. This can be risky on its own, but if they also refuse to wear secure, non-skid footwear or attempt to navigate stairs with the basket, they put themselves at greater risk. Failing to modify behaviors to account for new or increasing difficulties is a serious, yet common, contributing factor for falls in older individuals.

A fall rarely occurs due to only one of the reasons above. When any of these factors combine, it can lead to a serious, possibly life-threatening injury. Even if a loved one is lucky to escape a fall uninjured, the experience can leave them shaken. Unfortunately, the [**fear of falling**](https://www.agingcare.com/articles/fear-of-falling-may-cause-depression-in-older-adults-177853.htm) again can cause them to withdraw and become more sedentary, which often leads to further physical and even mental decline. To keep your loved one safe and healthy, learn how you can help modify their home and lifestyle to improve safety and [**prevent falls**](https://www.agingcare.com/articles/prevent-falls-fractures-and-broken-bones-among-elderly-137785.htm).

SOURCE: <https://www.agingcare.com/Articles/Falls-in-elderly-people-133953.htm>