



Staying independent

Taking safe steps to prevent falls

Get the best from
your medicines



Veterans' **MATES**

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Provided by:

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UniSA

A bad fall can really wreck your day, or week... and sometimes the effects can last for years.

Any fall can have an impact on your lifestyle, your confidence and your independence.

The good news is that falls do not need to be a part of getting older and it is easy to reduce your chance of falls and injury.

Why do older people **fall**?

People fall for many different reasons.

A fall is most likely when risk factors combine at the same time.

The most common risk factors are:

- side effects of some medicines or combination of medicines
- medical problems such as dizziness, balance problems, difficulties walking
- poor eyesight
- inappropriate foot wear
- not enough activity
- hazards in your environment such as poor lighting, slippery floors, steps, cords or even pets.

It makes sense to reduce as many risk factors as possible, to reduce your overall chance of a fall.



questions



tips

Am I at **risk of falling**?

Answer these 10 questions*. If you answer 'yes' to any of them, it is important that you talk to your doctor.

1. I have had at least one fall in the last year
Yes No
2. My health has got worse recently
Yes No
3. I take tablets for anxiety or sleep problems
Yes No
4. I often feel sad or unmotivated
Yes No
5. My medicine sometimes makes me feel dizzy
Yes No
6. My balance is not very good
Yes No
7. I have arthritis which sometimes prevents me from getting around or being active
Yes No
8. My vision is not very good
Yes No
9. I have trouble remembering things
Yes No
10. I often worry about falling
Yes No

*Adapted from materials developed by Monash University Accident Centre (VISAR)

What should I do?

Your doctor knows you have received this brochure and will be happy to discuss falls prevention with you.

If you take action now, and talk to your doctor, you can help maintain your independence and reduce your risk of falling in the future.

What will **my doctor** do?

To help you to reduce your risk of falling, your doctor:

- is likely to do an assessment
- may recommend changes to your medicines
- may recommend a tailored exercise program
- may recommend a walking aid if appropriate
- may suggest involving other health professionals such as a physiotherapist or occupational therapist.

For more information:

Talk to your doctor.

The DVA booklet **Homefront guide to preventing falls for older people** may also be helpful. It is available at:

http://www.dva.gov.au/sites/default/files/files/publications/health/preventing_falls.pdf