



Clallam County Fire District 3

Motto: *Serve, Respect,
Prevent and Protect*

Fall Prevention

The risk of falling becomes greater as we age and the potential for serious injury increases. Falls are the leading cause of injury-related deaths and the most common cause of injuries and hospital admissions among adults aged 65 and older. Many falls can be prevented and YOU can reduce your chances of falling by doing a few simple things:

Begin a Regular Exercise Program – Exercise is one of the most important ways to reduce your chances of falling. It makes you stronger and helps you feel better. Exercises that improve balance and coordination (like Tai Chi) are most helpful.

- ◆ Lack of exercise leads to weakness and increases your chances of falling.
- ◆ Ask your doctor or health care worker about the best type of exercise program for you.



Be Safe in Your Home – About half of all falls happen at home. To make your home safer:

Bathroom:

- Apply non-skid appliquéés on tub and shower floors.
- Install grab bars in tub and around toilet. Consider a shower chair.
- Avoid throw rugs or tack rugs down securely with double sided tape.
- Keep bathroom well lighted.

Kitchen:

- Keep commonly used items within easy reach.
- Avoid using floor polish or wax to reduce slick surfaces on floors.

Bedroom:

- Keep a telephone and light within easy reach of the bed.
- Rise slowly from bed to sitting position. Dangle legs for a few minutes prior to standing and walking.

Outdoor Home Safety Measures:

- Keep walk areas clear of clutter, rocks and tools. Keep well lighted at night.
- Keep walkways clear of snow and ice.
- Make sure walkways are level, free of cracks, loose gravel, holes, and constructed with slip resistant materials.

All Areas:

- Contrast in paint, furniture and carpet colors can be helpful.
- Ensure that stairways have sturdy handrails and safe treads.
- Keep halls, stairways, and pathways well lighted and free of clutter and obstacles. Keep walk areas clear.
- Apply slip strips on the edges of steps to reduce slick stair surfaces.
- Remove throw rugs or tack down securely with double sided adhesive tape. Tape down carpet edges.
- Place electrical cords and telephone wires away from walking paths.
- Post emergency numbers at every telephone. Carry a portable phone.

Other Steps You Can Take To Reduce Your Risk Of A Fall:

- Have regular vision and hearing check-ups.
- Clean eye glasses often to improve visibility.
- Wear proper fitting, supportive shoes with low heels or rubber soles.
- A proper diet and moderate exercise are essential. Females need an adequate intake of calcium.
- Use walking aids when necessary.
- See your doctor for the diagnosis, management, and treatment of underlying diseases.

Review Your Medicines – Have your doctor, pharmacist, or health care provider periodically review all the medicines you take (including over-the-counter medications and supplements). Be sure to discuss any potential side effects of the medications you are taking. Follow medication dosages closely. Using multiple medications and/or using medications incorrectly may cause dizziness, weakness and other side effects which can lead to a dangerous fall.

Have Your Vision Checked – Have your eyes checked regularly by an eye doctor. You may be wearing the wrong glasses or have a condition such as glaucoma or cataracts that limits your vision. Poor vision can increase your chances of falling.

FOUR things YOU can do to prevent falls:

1. Begin a regular exercise program
2. Make your home safer
3. Have your health care provider review your medicines
4. Have your vision checked

The good news - falls are preventable. Take a few minutes and conduct a safety audit of your home and implement some of the practical and cost-effective suggestions outlined for you.