



Preventing Falls: Why Your Medications Matter

Falls are one of the most common health risks for older adults, and medications can play a bigger role than you may realize. If you're one of the many seniors who take multiple medications each day, you may be at risk for side effects like dizziness, drowsiness, and balance problems. Because all of these can lead to falls, managing your medications can help you reduce your risk.



How Medications Can Increase Fall Risk

As we age, the way our bodies process medications can change. Some prescriptions, over-the-counter medicines, and even vitamins and supplements can affect balance, blood pressure, vision, or alertness. When several medications are taken together, the risk of side effects and drug interactions increases.

Common symptoms that may contribute to falls include:

- Dizziness or lightheadedness
- Drowsiness or fatigue
- Confusion or difficulty concentrating
- Changes in blood pressure
- Balance or coordination problems

If you experience any of these symptoms, it's important to let your care team know as soon as possible.

The Value of Medication Reviews

One of the best ways to reduce fall risk is to have your medications reviewed regularly. Clinical pharmacists can review your medication regimen to prevent interactions, help reduce medication-related risks, and help you maintain your mobility and independence.

A pharmacist may help by:

- Identifying medications that may increase fall risk
- Looking for duplicate medications, or medications you no longer need, to help simplify your regimen
- Checking for drug interactions
- Recommending safer alternative medications when appropriate
- Working with you to help make sure you're taking your medications correctly



Preventing Falls: Why Your Medications Matter

Speak Up About Missed Doses or Side Effects

Always let your care team know right away about missed doses and any side effects you're experiencing. Addressing these issues early can help you avoid serious complications, including falls and the injuries they can cause.

Speak up if you:

- Miss a dose of your medication
- Feel unsteady or dizzy after taking your medication
- Notice a new symptom
- Have questions about why a medication was prescribed

Simple Steps You Can Take

Here are some things you can do on your own to minimize your fall risk:

- Use walkers, canes, or other mobility aids as recommended by your care team
- If you're sitting or lying down, stand up slowly
- Keep walkways clear of clutter and anything you might trip on
- Wear supportive, non-slip footwear; avoid walking around in your socks
- Stay physically active by doing something that is within your abilities and that you enjoy
- Report any changes in balance, strength, or vision to your care team right away

Preventing falls means more than simply watching your step. Effectively managing your medications is a key part of staying safe. By working with your doctor, nurses, pharmacist, or other caregivers, and reporting concerns promptly, you can minimize your fall risk and maximize your quality of life.