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Preventing Falls: Conversation starters

Worrying about the health and safety of an older family member or friend can be stressful. Use these tips to talk to your loved one about preventing falls.

Begin by saying, “I care about you.”

- “You are important to me. I know you want to be independent and stay in your home, but I don’t want you to fall and get hurt.”
- “More than 1 in 4 older adults will fall each year. Most falls happen when people are doing everyday things like walking.”
- “There are things you can do to prevent falls.”

Talk about these ways to prevent falls.

- “Being active will help you feel better and stay independent.”
- “Physical activity can help you improve your balance and make you stronger. This will help keep you from falling.”
- “Ask your doctor or pharmacist to review your medicines. Some medicines can make you sleepy or dizzy and cause you to fall.”
- “Get your vision checked by an eye doctor every 1 to 2 years. You might need new glasses or contacts.”
- “Making your home safer can help protect you. For example, try putting non-slip mats in the bathtub or shower.”

Offer to help.

Here are some ideas:

- Help your loved one collect all of his medicines and put them in a bag to take to his next doctor’s visit.
- Go with your loved one to get her vision checked.

- Install railings on both sides of the stairs, and put grab bars inside and outside of the bathtub and next to the toilet. Or you can help your loved one find someone else to do this, like a professional contractor.
- Sign up for a tai chi (“tie chee”) class together. Tai chi is a mind-body exercise that improves balance.
- Make sure there's a phone close to your loved one's bed or favorite chair.
- Help move furniture in your loved one's home so the walking paths are clear.
- Pick up clothes, books, and other items from the floor and stairs. This will help keep your loved one from tripping.

For more information about helping older adults prevent falls, visit:

- Caregiver Brochure: <https://www.cdc.gov/steady/pdf/patient/customizable/Caregiver-Brochure-Final-Customizable-508.pdf>
- Prevent Falls and Fractures: <https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/prevent-falls-and-fractures>

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