

Medication Safety for Older Adults



When medications can cause harm: Falls

While medications are generally intended to make us feel better by treating disease or managing symptoms, they can be harmful in some situations.

Certain medications can have side effects that include dizziness, drowsiness, numbness, dehydration, lack of balance, vision impairment and more. These symptoms and others can increase your risk of falling.

To reduce your risk of falling:

- Discuss your medicines and your concerns about falling with your doctor at every visit or at least once a year. Ask about a falls risk assessment.
- Read the prescription label and Drug Facts materials; look for warnings about drowsiness, dizziness, muscle pain or weakness, joint pain, lack of balance, or driving or operating machinery while taking.
- Work with your doctor to decrease the dose, stop the medication, or switch it to a better alternative. Do not stop a medication without talking to your doctor.
- Whenever your health care provider gives you a new prescription, ask if the new medication(s) could increase your risk of falling.
- Ask your health care professional about alternative treatments that will treat your symptoms or condition without increasing your risk of falling.