



## Health conditions

Many health conditions can increase your risk of falling, especially anything that reduces your level of activity or makes you feel unsteady on your feet. Work with your health professional to develop a management plan that suits you and helps you to manage any health conditions that increase your day-to-day risk of falls.

**Take action to manage and maintain your health –  
develop a plan with your health professionals.**

### Do you have a health condition that could increase your risk of falling?

Q I have been diagnosed with a health condition, such as diabetes, stroke, arthritis, Parkinson's disease, depression, dementia or a heart condition Yes  No

A If you answered 'Yes'

- › Have a regular check up with your doctor and/or health professional.
- › Learn as much as you can about your condition by talking to your doctor or a health professional. Ask them for relevant and reliable brochures, information booklets, websites and contact details for a support group.
- › Seek early treatment if your symptoms change.

Q I experience feelings of dizziness or light-headedness Yes  No

A If you answered 'Yes'

If you are dizzy or light-headed, visit your doctor to discuss your symptoms.

Q I experience problems with my bladder or bowel Yes  No

A If you answered 'Yes'

Incontinence is a common problem that can be addressed with the correct treatment. There are many ways to manage bladder or bowel problems depending on the type of problem you have. The first thing to do is to see your doctor to have a continence assessment. After this your doctor or continence assessor will develop a management plan with you. With help, you can manage incontinence and resume a healthy active lifestyle. Refer to the continence section (pages 22 to 24).

Q I find it hard to hear Yes  No

A If you answered 'Yes'

Hearing loss is a common chronic condition. People with mild hearing loss are more likely to have a history of falling than people with normal hearing. Have your hearing tested and wear your hearing aids, talk with your health professional if any further hearing tests are needed.

## Have you lost your confidence because of worrying about falling?

Q I have had a trip, slip, stumble or fall in the last six months (even if it did not cause an injury) Yes  No

A If you answered 'Yes'

A previous fall, even a minor one, increases your chances of having a more serious fall in the future. Falls are preventable, so take action and see if you can work out why you fell. Complete this checklist and talk about any 'yes' responses with your doctor or health professional.

Q I limit my daily activities because I worry about falling Yes  No

A If you answered 'Yes'

Worrying about falling is common, particularly after a previous fall. After a fall, many people try and reduce their activity so they do not fall again. However, if you limit your activity then this reduces muscle strength, mobility and social contact – all of which increases your falls risk.

Talk to your doctor or health professional if you have concerns about falling or can't go about your normal daily activities.

## Tips to manage your health

- › Work with your doctor or other health professionals to develop an understandable and achievable personal health care plan.
- › Be aware that your state of mind can contribute to your risk of falling.

## Who can help?

- › Doctor
- › Specialist
- › General practice or community nurse
- › Physiotherapist
- › Psychologist
- › Occupational therapist
- › Support group (e.g. arthritis support group)

Further information on support groups in your area is available from 13 HEALTH and My Aged Care and Carer Gateway (further information available on pages 38 to 39).

I plan to take action by...

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