



Preventing Falls Around Pets

Tips to Stay Safe Around Cats and Dogs

Pets can be loyal friends and provide unconditional love. But pets, their toys, and food bowls can also create fall hazards. Below are tips on how to stay safe around pets.

Did You Know:

- Each year, about 86,000 fall injuries involve dogs and cats.
- Women are two times more likely to be injured than men.
- The highest fracture rates are among adults age 75 and older.

Indoors:

- Keep pet items like toys and food/water bowls out of paths and walk ways to avoid tripping over them. Wipe up spills immediately.
- For cats and smaller dogs that may run under your feet, place a bell on the pet collar to let you know when your pet is nearby.
- Larger dogs may jump to greet you or your guests. Consider obedience training to control behaviors that may increase falls, such as pushing or pulling.

- Be aware of your pet when people of all ages visit your home. Older adults with balance problems and children may be at risk of falling when around your pet.

Outdoors:

- Know your pet's behavior. Some dogs can knock you over if they get excited or pull you down if they run towards other dogs.
- Walk or jog with your pet in familiar, well-lit areas with level ground. Depending on your dog's behavior, it may be best to walk in areas away from other dogs.
- Use two hands on the leash when walking your dog - increase your stability by placing one hand on the handle or leash loop and the other hand lower down on the leash.
- Keep control of your dog to protect those around you - if your dog barks or startles a person with balance problems, he or she may be at risk of falling.

By Jessica Pynoos, MSW; Caroline Cicero, MSW, MPL; Emily Nabors, MSG; and Anna Nguyen, OTD, OTR/L. This fact sheet was distributed by the Fall Prevention Coalition - Los Angeles (FPC-LA), supported by the Kaiser Foundation; and created by the Fall Prevention Center of Excellence (FPCE), supported by the Archstone Foundation. For more information, visit www.stopfalls.org, call (213) 740-1364, or email info@stopfalls.org. Last updated: June 2010.

