

Vision Loss and Fall Risk

Understanding How Changes in Vision Increase the Risk of Falls

Did You Know:

- Individuals with vision problems are more than twice as likely to fall as people without vision problems.
- Vision problems can affect balance, the ability to walk, and upper and lower body strength.

How Vision Loss Increases Fall Risk:

Eye diseases (such as glaucoma, cataracts, macular degeneration, diabetic retinopathy) and normal age-related vision changes can cause:

Vision Problems

- Blurry or distorted vision
- Sensitivity to bright lights/glare
- Difficulty seeing objects
- Problems seeing edges and changes in surfaces
- Difficulty seeing at night
- Problems judging depth and distances

Effects of Vision Loss

- Difficulty maintaining balance
- Shuffling or problems walking
- Difficulty seeing clutter or obstacles
- Difficulty going up and down stairs, steps, and curbs
- Reduced activity, leading to decreased strength and balance



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Ways to Reduce Vision-Related Fall Risks:

- Have eye check-ups at least once a year and whenever your vision changes.
- Share concerns you have about your vision with your doctor.
- If you wear glasses or contact lenses, make sure your prescriptions are up-to-date.
- Check your home for safety hazards and make necessary changes:
 - Adjust lighting so it is bright enough to see, but does not cause glare.
 - Mark edges of stairs with bright high-contrast strips or paint.
 - Keep floors clear of clutter; secure throw rugs and electrical cords.
 - Add nightlights to the path from bedroom to bathroom.
 - Keep frequently used items close by.
- If you wear eyeglasses and still have trouble seeing, ask your doctor about low vision services.

Normal Vision



Glaucoma



Cataracts



Age-Related Macular Degeneration (AMD)



Diabetic Retinopathy



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