

FALLS



Risk Factors for Falls

Research has identified many risk factors that contribute to falling—some of these are modifiable.

Most falls are caused by the interaction of multiple risk factors. The more risk factors a person has, the greater their chances of falling. Healthcare providers can lower a person's risk by reducing or minimizing that individual's risk factors.

To prevent falls, providers should focus **FIRST** on these modifiable risk factors:

- Lower body weakness
- Difficulties with gait and balance
- Use of psychoactive medications
- Postural dizziness
- Poor vision
- Problems with feet and/or shoes
- Home hazards



Fall risk factors are categorized as **intrinsic** or **extrinsic**.

| Intrinsic | Extrinsic |
|---|----------------------------------|
| Advanced age | Lack of stair handrails |
| Previous falls | Poor stair design |
| Muscle weakness | Lack of bathroom grab bars |
| Gait & balance problems | Dim lighting or glare |
| Poor vision | Obstacles & tripping hazards |
| Postural hypotension | Slippery or uneven surfaces |
| Chronic conditions including arthritis, diabetes, stroke, Parkinson's, incontinence, dementia | Psychoactive medications |
| Fear of falling | Improper use of assistive device |



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