FALLS PREVENTION COMMUNITY TOOLKIT

Falls are the leading cause of injury-related death and hospitalization for Utahns aged 65+. It can be overwhelming after an injury and an emergency room visit so please make sure that you follow up with your primary care provider.

There are six easy ways to reduce the risk of falling:

1. Begin a regular exercise program. Exercise improves strength and balance, as well as coordination. Your local Area Agency on Aging or local health department may offer exercise and falls prevention classes near you.
2. Talk to your healthcare provider. Ask your healthcare provider if you are at risk of falling. It's also important to tell your healthcare provider if you have fallen before.
3. Have your healthcare provider review your medicines. Some medicines or combinations of medicines can make you sleepy or dizzy and can cause you to fall.
4. Your eyes and ears are the key to keeping you on your feet. Have your vision and hearing checked at least once a year. Poor vision and hearing can increase your chance of falling.
5. Make your home safer. Remove tripping hazards like throw rugs and clutter in walkways as well as books and papers from stairs. Install grab bars next to your toilet and shower.
6. Talk to your family members and ask for their help. Falling is not just an older adult issue, family members can help you stay safe.

Utah Falls Prevention Alliance

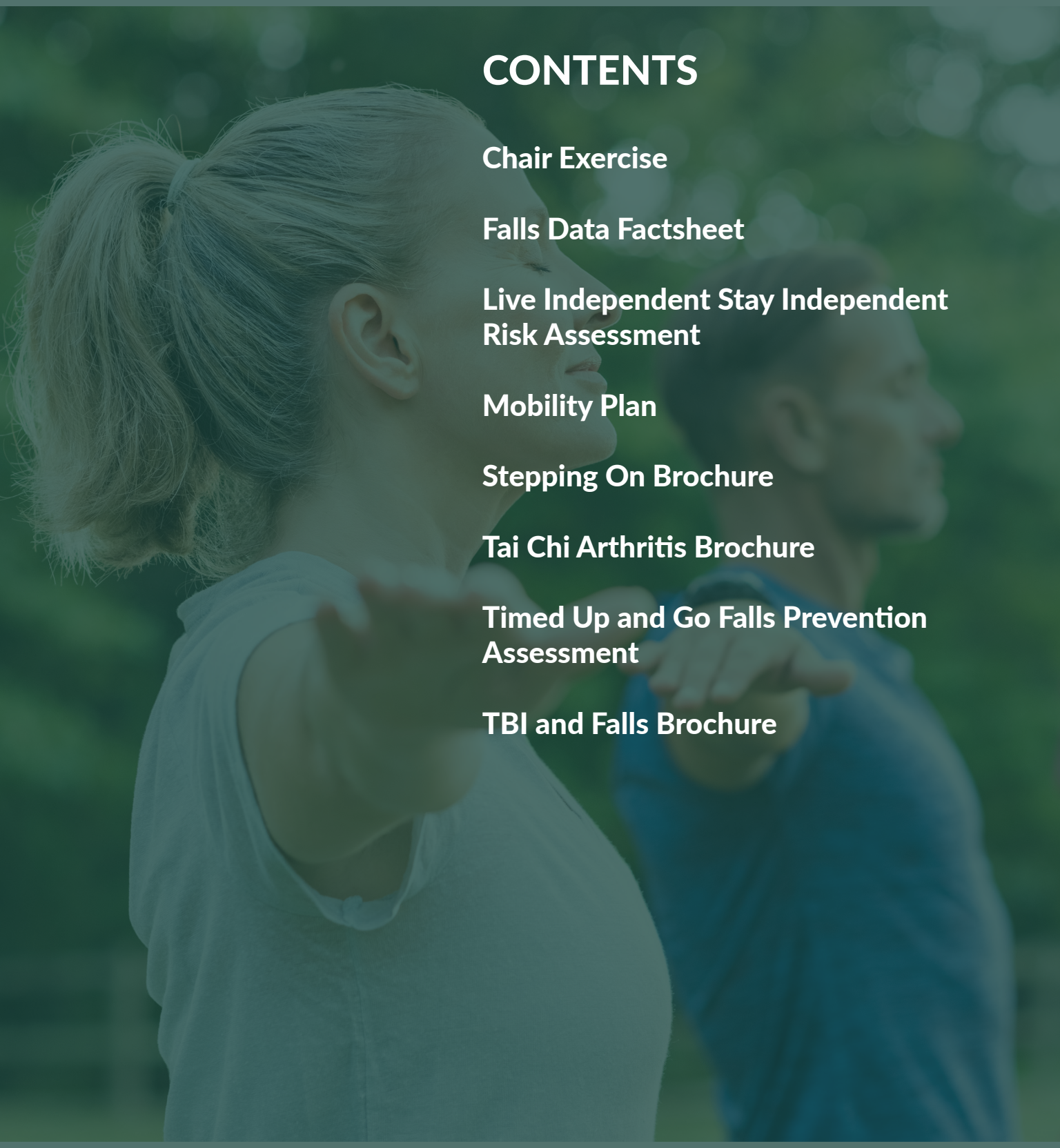
The state of Utah has a Falls Prevention Alliance that is dedicated to representing the needs of seniors. The Utah Falls Prevention Alliance was formed in May 2017. The group is composed of diverse stakeholders dedicated to reducing falls and fall injuries in Utah's older adult population. The alliance works to increase public awareness of the steps older adults and their families can take to prevent falls. The Alliance builds connections between healthcare providers, Emergency Medical Services, and health insurers to improve coordination of care. Find more information about the alliance at **utahfallsprevention.org**.

Living Well

The Utah Department of Health houses the Living Well program. This program connects Utahns with several health-related workshops and trainings. Visit **livingwell.utah.gov** to find workshops for arthritis, Alzheimer's and dementia, diabetes, pain management, health screenings, and more.

Utah Aging Services

The Utah Division of Aging and Adult Services serves as a link between the national Administration on Aging and local programs, Area Agencies on Aging. Area Agencies administer a wide variety of home and community-based services for Utah residents who are 60 and older. The goal is to ensure services are provided statewide that allow people to remain independent. You can find more information at **daas.utah.gov**.



CONTENTS

RECOMMENDED EXERCISE

Chair Rise Exercise

What it does: Strengthens the muscles in your thighs and buttocks.

Goal: To do this exercise without using your hands as you become stronger.

How to do it:

1. Sit toward the front of a sturdy chair with your knees bent and feet flat on the floor, shoulder-width apart.
2. Rest your hands lightly on the seat on either side of you, keeping your back and neck straight, and chest slightly forward.
3. Breathe in slowly. Lean forward and feel your weight on the front of your feet.
4. Breathe out, and slowly stand up, using your hands as little as possible.
5. Pause for a full breath in and out.
6. Breathe in as you slowly sit down. Do not let yourself collapse back down into the chair. Rather, control your lowering as much as possible.
7. Breathe out.

Repeat 10-15 times. If this number is too hard for you when you first start practicing this exercise, begin with fewer and work up to this number.

Rest for a minute, then do a final set of 10-15.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
National Center for Injury Prevention and Control

STEADI Stopping Elderly Accidents, Deaths & Injuries

2017

Falls Among Older Adults

UTAH DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
Violence & Injury Prevention Program

There are ways for older adults to reduce the risk of falling.

Falls are the leading cause of injury-related death and hospitalization for Utahns aged 65+ (**Figures 1 and 2**).[1]

Every week, 200 Utahns aged 65+ are injured severely enough from a fall to seek treatment in an emergency department, 63 are admitted to a hospital, and three die from fall-related injuries.[1,2]

Nearly one-third (30%) of Utahns aged 65+ reported falling at least once in the past year.[3]

Talk to your healthcare provider. Ask your doctor if you are at risk of falling. It's also important to tell your doctor if you have fallen before.

Begin a regular exercise program to prevent an injury due to a fall. Exercise improves strength and balance, as well as coordination. Your local Area Agency on Aging or local health department may offer exercise and falls prevention classes near you.

Have your healthcare provider review your medicines. Some medicines or combinations of medicines can make you sleepy or dizzy and can cause you to fall.

(801) 538-6864 | vipp@utah.gov | www.health.utah.gov/vipp

"Falling is not an inevitable part of aging. Through practical lifestyle changes, the number of falls among seniors can be reduced substantially."

Utah and U.S. Trends

Falls are the leading cause of non-fatal injury-related hospital admissions among Utahns aged 65+.[4] More than half of Utahns aged 65+ who were hospitalized due to a fall were discharged to residential care or a rehabilitation facility. Only 24% were able to return home.[5]

The rate of fall hospitalizations in Utah has been lower than the national rate since 2008 (**Figure 1**).[1,2] Adults aged 65+ accounted for 77% of all fall-related deaths in Utah.[4] In 2016, the rate of fall injury deaths in Utah was significantly lower than the national rate (**Figure 2**).[1]

Figure 1. Rate of Fall Hospitalizations per 10,000 Residents Aged 65+, Utah and U.S., 2004-2014

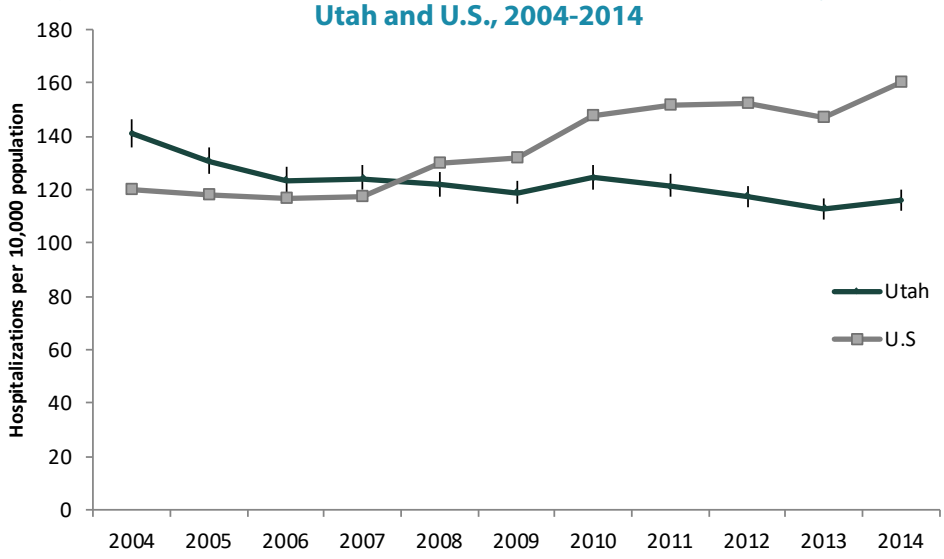


Figure 2. Rate of Fall Injury Deaths per 100,000 Population Aged 65+, Utah and U.S., 2004-2017

Age and Sex

Females had a significantly higher rate of fall hospitalizations than their male counterparts across all age groups (Figure 3).[6] Utahns aged 85 years and older had the highest rates of both fatal fall-related injuries and non-fatal fall hospitalizations (Figure 4).[7]

Figure 3. Rate of Fall-related Deaths per 100,000 Population by Sex and Age Group, Utah, 2015-2017

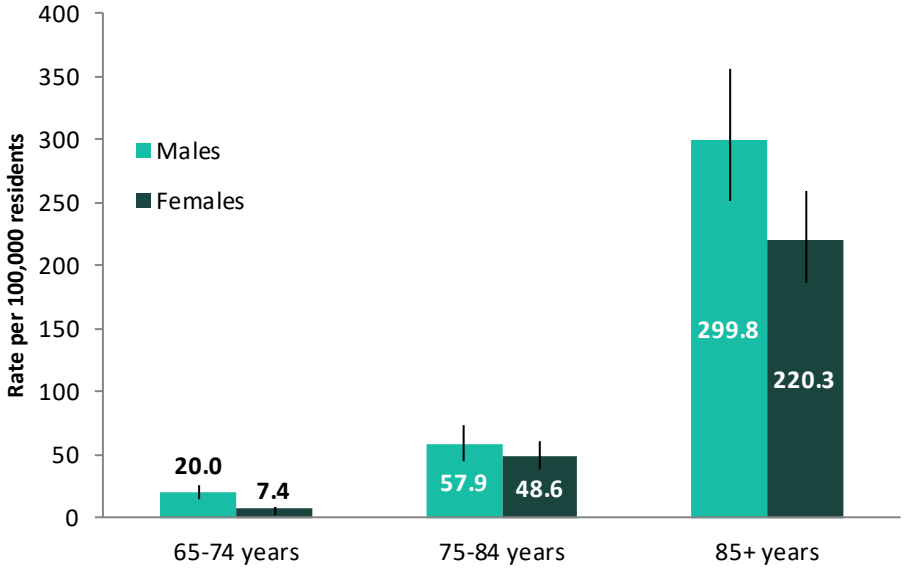
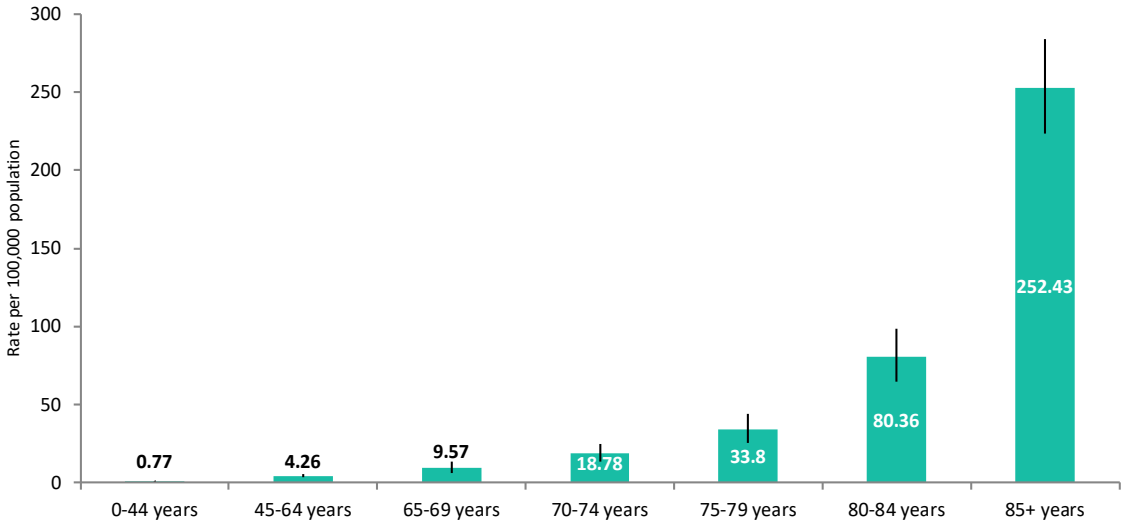


Figure 4. Rate of Fall-related Deaths per 100,000 Population by Age Group, Utah, 2014-2016



Costs

In 2014, more than 3,400 Utahns aged 65+ who fell were hospitalized at a cost of $121 million (Table 1). The average hospitalization charge was $35,993.[8]

Table 1. Falls Hospitalization Cost by Primary Payer, 2014

Medicaid	$412,406.00
Other Government	$438,464.00
Industrial and Worker's Compensation	$932,933.00
Blue Cross/Blue Shield	$1,039,002.00
Other Commercial	$1,978,392.00
Self Pay	$2,012,293.00
Managed Care	$2,465,960.00
Medicare	$112,013,816.00
Total Cost	**$121,368,955.00**

"Many falls can be prevented by addressing home safety, managing medications, receiving annual vision checks, and performing regular strength and balance exercises."

Prevention Tips for Healthcare Providers

- Increase multifactorial risk assessment and individually-tailored interventions to address modifiable risk factors suah as; strength, gait and balance, vision, home safety, and medication management with patients.[7]
- Encourage patients to participate in an evidence-based community program to reduce falls, such as Stepping On, Otago, EnhanceFitness, or Tai Chi for Arthritis.
- Health-related resources and classes can be found on the living well website (livingwell.utah.gov). There is a falls prevention workshops. Classes meet once a week for two hours. One session is 7 weeks long. Classes include interactive discussion and storytelling to promote adult learning. Education topics include: falls and risks, strength and balance exercises, medication review, home hazards, safe footwear, vision and falls, community mobility, and safety in public places.

Prevention Tips for Older Adults

There are six easy ways to reduce the risk of falling:

1. Begin a regular exercise program. Exercise improves strength and balance, as well as coordination. Your local Area Agency on Aging or local health department may offer exercise and falls prevention classes near you.
2. Talk to your healthcare provider. Ask your healthcare provider if you are at risk of falling. It's also important to tell your healthcare provider if you have fallen before.
3. Have your healthcare provider review your medicines. Some medicines or combinations of medicines can make you sleepy or dizzy and can cause you to fall.
4. Your eyes and ears are the key to keeping you on your feet. Have your vision and hearing checked at least once a year. Poor vision and hearing can increase your chance of falling.
5. Make your home safer. Remove tripping hazards like throw rugs and clutter in walkways as well as books and papers from stairs. Install grab bars next to your toilet and shower.
6. Talk to your family members and ask for their help. Falling is not just an older adult issue family members can help you stay safe.

Resources

- Utah Department of Health, Violence and Injury Prevention Program **www.health.utah.gov/vipp/older-adults/falls/**
- National Council on Aging **www.ncoa.org/healthy-aging/falls-prevention/**
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention **www.cdc.gov/homeandrecreationalsafety/falls/**

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This report was created with the most recent data available as of September 2018. Due to issues incident to the 2015 transition to the ICD-10-CM coding system, 2014 is the most recent data year available for ED visits and hospitalizations.

Four Things You Can Do to Prevent Falls:

1 Speak up

Talk openly with your healthcare provider about fall risks and prevention. Ask your doctor or pharmacist to review your medicines.

2 Keep moving

Begin an exercise program to improve your leg strength and balance.

3 Get an annual eye exam

Replace eyeglasses as needed.

4 Make your home safer

Remove clutter and tripping hazards. Put railings on all stairs and add grab bars in the bathroom. Install good lighting, especially on stairs.

Contact your local community or senior center for information on exercise, fall prevention programs, or options for improving home safety.

For more information on fall prevention, please visit:

www.utahfallsprevention.org
www.cdc.gov/steadi
www.stopfalls.org

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
National Center for Injury Prevention and Control

Utah Falls Prevention Alliance
www.ucoa.utah.edu/fpa

Live Independent
Stay Independent

Fall-related injuries are one of the main reasons why people lose their independence

Are you at risk?

Check Your Risk for Falling

Circle "Yes" or "No" for each statement below			Why it matters
Yes (2)	No (0)	I have fallen in the past year.	People who have fallen once are likely to fall again.
Yes (2)	No (0)	I use or have been advised to use a cane or walker to get around safely.	People who have been advised to use a cane or walker may already be more likely to fall.
Yes (1)	No (0)	Sometimes I feel unsteady when I am walking.	Unsteadiness or needing support while walking are signs of poor balance.
Yes (1)	No (0)	I steady myself by holding onto furniture when walking at home.	This is also a sign of poor balance.
Yes (1)	No (0)	I am worried about falling.	People who are worried about falling are more likely to fall.
Yes (1)	No (0)	I need to push with my hands to stand up from a chair.	This is a sign of weak leg muscles, a major reason for falling.
Yes (1)	No (0)	I have some trouble stepping up onto a curb.	This is also a sign of weak leg muscles.
Yes (1)	No (0)	I often have to rush to the toilet.	Rushing to the bathroom, especially at night, increases your chance of falling.
Yes (1)	No (0)	I have lost some feeling in my feet.	Numbness in your feet can cause stumbles and lead to falls.
Yes (1)	No (0)	I take medicine that sometimes makes me feel light-headed or more tired than usual.	Side effects from medicines can sometimes increase your chance of falling.
Yes (1)	No (0)	I take medicine to help me sleep or improve my mood.	These medicines can sometimes increase your chance of falling.
Yes (1)	No (0)	I often feel sad or depressed.	Symptoms of depression, such as not feeling well or feeling slowed down, are linked to falls.

Total_____

Add up the number of points for each "yes" answer. If you scored 4 points or more, you may be at risk for falling. Discuss this brochure with your doctor.

This checklist was developed by the Greater Los Angeles VA Geriatric Research Education Clinical Center and affiliates and is a validated fall risk self-assessment tool (Rubenstein et al. J Safety Res; 2011: 42(6)493-499). Adapted with permission of the authors.

MyMobility Plan

What can you do to stay independent?

Many people make financial plans for retirement, but not everyone plans for other changes that may come with age. This includes changes in your mobility—your ability to get around.

It's not easy to talk about, but as we get older, physical changes can make it harder to get around and do things we want or need to do—like driving, shopping, or doing household chores.

There may be a time when you still need to get around, but can no longer drive.

You might not have mobility problems now, but you could in the future. You may even know others who already do—perhaps a parent, relative, friend, or neighbor. While it may not be possible to prevent all of these changes, there are actions you and your loved ones can take today, and as you age, to help keep you safe and independent tomorrow.

MySelf
A plan to stay independent

MyHome
A plan to stay safe at home

MyNeighborhood
A plan to stay mobile in my community

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
National Center for Injury Prevention and Control

Make a plan today.
Stay independent tomorrow.

MySelf | A plan to stay independent

Staying healthy and managing chronic conditions help maintain your mobility.

To start building your plan, complete the checklist below.

☐ **Get a physical checkup each year.**

Some health issues may increase your risk of falling (such as leg weakness and balance problems).

Last Exam Date: _____

Next Exam Date: _____

☐ **Review all your medicines with a doctor or pharmacist.**

Certain medicines can have side effects that can change your ability to drive, walk, or get around safely.
To learn more, go to:
https://go.usa.gov/xPADs

☐ **Get a medical eye exam each year.**

Eye problems can increase your risk of falling or being in a car crash.

Last Exam Date: _____

Next Exam Date: _____

MyMobility Tip

Good eyesight is about more than 20/20 vision. For example, you need to see well in the dark to drive safely at night.

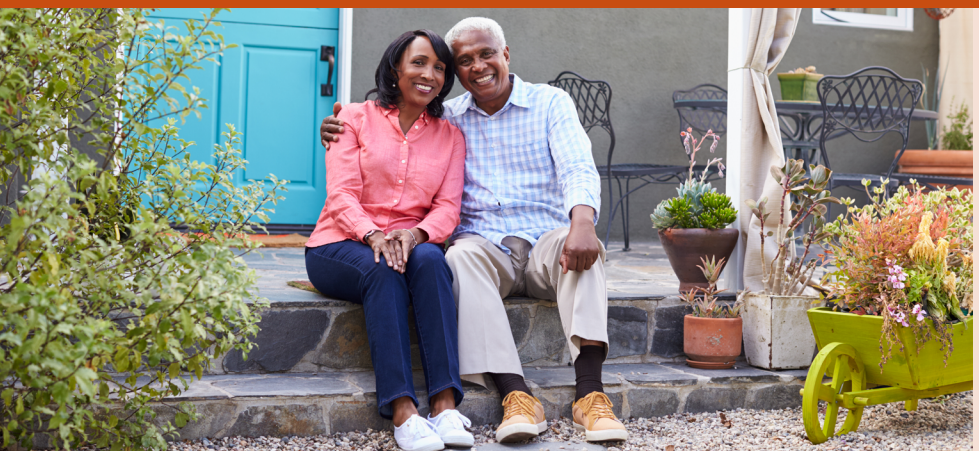
Get a medical eye exam each year and address any issues.

☐ **Follow a regular activity program to increase your strength and balance.**

Strength and balance activities, done at least 3 times a week, can reduce your risk of falling. Other activities, like walking, are good for you, but don't help prevent falls. Visit the National Institute on Aging's website for suggestions:
www.go4life.nia.nih.gov/exercises

Strength Activity		Balance Activity	
Exercise	Start Date	Exercise	Start Date
Chair stand	*Next Monday*	*Tai Chi*	*Next Monday*

MyHome | A plan to stay safe at home



To continue your plan, schedule a time to go through the following home safety checklist to help prevent falls.

Check the FLOORS in each room and reduce tripping hazards:

- ☐ Keep objects off the floor.
- ☐ Remove or tape down rugs.
- ☐ Coil or tape cords and wires next to the wall and out of the way.

Check the KITCHEN:

- ☐ Put often-used items within easy reach (about waist level).
- ☐ For items not within easy reach, always use a step stool and never use a chair.

Check the BEDROOMS:

- ☐ Use bright light bulbs.
- ☐ Place lamps close to the bed where they are within reach.
- ☐ Put in night-lights to be able to see a path in the dark. For areas that don't have electrical outlets, consider battery-operated lights.

Check inside and outside STAIRS and STEPS:

- ☐ Check for loose or uneven steps. Repair if needed.
- ☐ Make sure carpet is firmly attached to every step, or remove carpet and attach non-slip rubber treads.
- ☐ Check for loose or broken handrails. Repair if needed.
- ☐ Consider installing handrails on both sides of the stairs.
- ☐ Use bright overhead lighting at the top and bottom of the stairs.
- ☐ Consider putting light switches at both the top and bottom of the stairs.

Check the BATHROOMS:

- ☐ Put non-slip rubber mats or self-stick strips on the floor of the tub or shower.
- ☐ Consider installing grab bars for support getting in or out of the tub or shower, and up from the toilet.

MyMobility Tip

Falls are more likely when wearing inappropriate footwear, such as flip flops that don't cover the heel.

Wear safe shoes that fit well, have a firm heel to provide stability, and have a textured sole to prevent slipping.

For more home modification information and resources: https://go.usa.gov/xUEs3

MyNeighborhood | A plan to stay mobile in my community

Finish your plan by filling out the table below.

Think of all the places you go and how you get there.

Then, consider how you would get to these same places if you couldn't use your current way.

☐ **Find transportation options in your ZIP code:**

- Rides in Sight
  1-855-607-4337
  www.ridesinsight.org

Ride share services can help keep you connected to family and friends. Staying social helps maintain quality of life as you age.

Where do I go now? (Such as doctor, grocery store, or physical activity class)	**How do I get there now?** (Such as drive, get a ride, or use public transportation)	**How will I get there in the future?** (Such as bus, rideshare, or ride with a friend)
Meet friends for lunch	*Drive myself*	*Get a ride from a friend*

☐ **Consider a driver refresher course.**

Some insurers give a discount on your car insurance for taking a course:

- AARP (888) 687-2277 or www.aarp.org
- AAA (800) 222-4357 or www.aaa.com

MyMobility Tip

Practice safe behaviors, such as always wearing a seatbelt, as a driver or a passenger.

For more information visit:
www.cdc.gov/motorvehiclesafety/older_adult_drivers/mymobility

Distributed by:

Intermountain Medical Center/Trauma Services/Teresa Brunt RN
801-507-6693
intermountainhealthcare.org/

Why should you be concerned about falls?

- More than a third of those 65 or older fall each year.
- Falls are the leading cause of injury, hospitalizations and deaths for older adults.
- Falls can shake your confidence, keeping you from doing the things you want. Avoiding falls is key to your independence!

Find an Upcoming Workshop

Contact Us Today

Utah Department of Health
(888) 222-2542
www.livingwell.utah.gov

Sponsored by:

UTAH DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
Violence & Injury Prevention Program

Stepping On

Stepping On:
Building Confidence, Reducing Falls

Join this 7-week workshop where you'll learn exercises and strategies to help you stay strong, active, and independent.

Classes are free.
(888) 222- 2542

What is Stepping On?

Stepping On is a program that has been researched and proven to reduce falls by 30% in older adults.

Workshops meet for two hours a week for seven weeks. They are led by a health professional and a peer leader–someone who, just like you, is concerned about falls.

Local guest experts such as an Occupational or Physical Therapist, Pharmacist, and Optometrist provide information on exercise, vision, safety, and medication.

Stepping On

What do participants say about Stepping On?

"When I'm walking I still think, 'lift your feet, walk heel-to-toe.' I have stopped falling outside! It has made me more aware of the way I walk."

"Not only did we learn some things about preventing falls, but we had a good time doing it. It was really fun."

What you'll learn

- Simple, effective balance and strengthening exercises
- How medications can contribute to falls
- How to eliminate fall hazards from your home

Is this workshop for you?

Stepping On is designed specifically for anyone who:

- Is 60 or older
- Has had a fall in the past year or is fearful of falling
- Lives at home or in an apartment
- Does not have dementia

Why should you be concerned about falls?

- 1 in 4 Americans aged 65+ fall every year.
- Falls are the leading cause of injury, hospitalization, and death for older adults.
- You can take control of your health and prevent falls.

Six Steps to Prevent a Fall

1. Find a good balance and exercise program
2. Talk to your health care provider about falls prevention
3. Regularly review your medications with your health care provider or pharmacist
4. Get your vision and hearing checked annually and update your eyeglasses
5. Keep your home safe from falling hazards
6. Talk to your family about staying safe

Resources

Utah's Falls Prevention Alliance (FPA)
www.ucoa.utah.edu/fpa

Health education program
www.livingwell.utah.gov

Healthy aging
www.ncoa.org

To find a class in your area,

call 1-888-222-2542

TAI CHI for HEALTH Dr Paul Lam

UTAH DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
Violence & Injury Prevention Program

Tai Chi for Arthritis:

Relaxing, fun, and easy to learn

Join the class where you'll learn and practice this ancient exercise consisting of slow, relaxed movements to prevent falls and to improve your body and life.

Call 1-888-222-2542 to find a class near you.

What is Tai Chi for Arthritis?

Tai Chi for Arthritis (TCA) is a program designed by Dr. Paul Lam, in conjunction with a team of medical experts and tai chi masters. Using the sun style of tai chi, the TCA program is easy to learn, safe, and effective.

Each class includes:

- Warm-up and cool-down exercises
- One or two movements per lesson, progressively leading to completing the six basic core movements and six advanced extension movements
- Breathing techniques
- Tai Chi principles, including those relating to improving physical and mental balance

Tai Chi for Arthritis has been shown to:

- Improve balance
- Increase muscular strength
- Improve mobility
- Increase flexibility
- Improve psychological health
- Decrease pain
- Prevent falls

The class meets for one hour, twice a week. It is led by a trained instructor.

Is this class for you?

Tai Chi for Arthritis is designed for anyone who:

- Is 60 or older
- Has had a fall in the past year, or is fearful of falling
- Has mild, moderate, or severe joint pain and/or back pain
- Adults with or without arthritis

The Utah Traumatic Brain Injury Fund

The TBI Fund helps to link individuals throughout Utah with resources to meet their goals. The fund also assists with a successful return to work, school, or community. The TBI Fund offers free brain injury coaching, access to neuropsychological assessments, and community or family training. Our experienced brain injury coaches understand what you are going through and can get you connected to the resources you need to be successful.

Contact us today to be connected with a brain injury coach.

Phone: 1-888-222-2542
Email: tbi@utah.gov
Website: health.utah.gov/tbi

UTAH
TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY FUND

You are not alone, help is available.

Contact us

1-888-222-2542

health.utah.gov/vipp/older-adults/tbi/

tbi@utah.gov

UTAH DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
Violence & Injury Prevention Program

Past injuries can affect you today

Traumatic brain injuries, even from years ago, can affect the way you think, feel, and act.

Utah Traumatic Brain Injury Fund
health.utah.gov/tbi
1-888-222-2542

UTAH DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
Violence & Injury Prevention Program

Understanding head injuries

Many head injuries are what doctors call a 'traumatic brain injury' or 'TBI'. Often, they happen when someone falls and bumps their head.

Symptoms of a TBI

Symptoms may appear days, or even months after an injury, and can be easy to dismiss as a normal part of aging, however, that's not always the case.

Symptoms of a brain injury include:

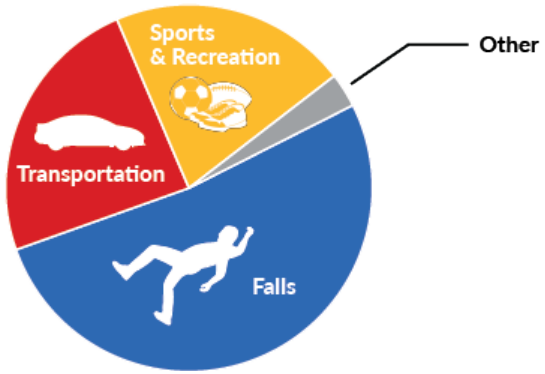
- Headaches
- Fatigue
- Vision problems (like blurred vision)
- Light/noise sensitivity
- Difficulty with balance/coordination
- Sleep problems
- Anxiety and/or Depression
- Impulsive behavior, aggression, or irritability

Additional symptoms

Symptoms include difficulty with:

- Concentration
- Slowed information processing
- Memory
- Organization
- Initiation and follow through
- Language comprehension

How do brain injuries happen?



TBIs have many causes, but more than half of them happen because of a fall.

5 easy questions to ask yourself

In your lifetime, have you ever:

1. Been treated for a head or neck injury? **Yes/No**

2. Hurt your head or neck in a bike, car, or other accident? **Yes/No**

3. Injured your head or neck in a fight, or from being hit? **Yes/No**

4. Injured your head or neck in a fall, or while playing sports? **Yes/No**

5. Been near an explosion or blast (including in the military)? **Yes/No**

Did you answer **Yes** to any of these questions? If so, talk to your doctor or call 1-888-222-2542 to learn more about how to get connected to the resources you need to be successful in your recovery.

Preventing Falls in Older Adults
Fall Prevention Assessment

UTAH DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
Violence & Injury Prevention Program

TIMED UP & GO (TUG)

Purpose

The purpose of the TUG assessment is to assess mobility. It is simple to perform and requires only a stopwatch and chair.

Directions

Patients wear their regular footwear and can use a walking aid, if needed.

1. Begin by having the patient sit back in a standard arm chair.
2. Create a line on the floor using tape 10 feet away from the chair.
3. Instruct the patient:

    When I say "go," I want you to:

    A. Stand up from the chair
    B. Walk to the line on the floor at your normal pace.
    C. Walk back to the chair at your normal pace.
    D. Sit down again.

4. On the word "go," begin timing.
5. Stop timing after the patient sits back down.
6. Record the time.

Results

If the patient took more than 12 seconds to complete the TUG assessment, they should talk to their doctor about the assessment and their risk for falling.

THE IMPACT

OTAGO

The Otago fall prevention program was piloted around the state of Utah. Data was collected to assess the effectiveness of the program. A TUG assessment was administered before and after the program, as well as a survey where patients self-reported the number of falls they had experienced three months before the program and in the three months since the program.

After participants finished OTAGO the average seconds to complete TUG decreased by

4

seconds

The average number of self-reported falls decreased by

14%

To learn more, visit **www.health.utah.gov/vipp/older-adults/falls**

FALLS PREVENTION COMMUNITY TOOLKIT

UTAH DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
Violence & Injury Prevention Program