

INDIAN HEALTH SERVICE

OLDER ADULT/ELDER FALLS





Falling

Each year, millions of older people—those 65 and older—fall. In fact, more than one out of four older people falls each year, but less than half tell their doctor. Falling once doubles your chances of falling again.

What Conditions Make You More Likely to Fall?

- Lower body weakness
- Vitamin D deficiency
- Difficulties with walking and balance
- Use of medicines
- Vision problems
- Foot pain or poor footwear
- Home hazards (uneven steps, rugs, clutter)



AI/AN Bingozize Class, Bakersfield, CA

FALLING STATISTICS

Falls Cause Most Injury Deaths Among AI/AN Elders!

- One out of five falls causes a serious injury such as broken bones or a head injury.
- Each year, 3 million older people are treated in emergency departments for fall injuries.



WHAT YOU CAN DO TO PREVENT FALLS

Talk to Your Doctor

Ask your doctor or healthcare provider to evaluate your risk for falling and talk with them about specific things you can do. Ask your doctor or pharmacist to review your medicines to see if any might make you dizzy or sleepy. This review should include prescription medicines and over-the-counter medicines. Ask your doctor or healthcare provider about taking vitamin D supplements.

Do Strength and Balance Exercises

Do exercises that make your legs stronger and improve your balance. Yoga and Tai Chi are great examples.

Have Your Eyes Checked

Have your eyes checked by an eye doctor at least once a year, and be sure to update your eyeglasses if needed.

Make Your Home Safer

- Get rid of things you could trip over.
- Add grab bars inside and outside your tub or shower and next to the toilet.
- Put railings on both sides of stairs.
- Make sure your home has lots of light by adding more or brighter light bulbs.
- Keep items you use often in cabinets you can reach easily without using a step stool.
- Use non-slip mats in the bathtub/shower.

- Over 800,000 patients a year are hospitalized because of a fall injury, most often because of a head injury or hip fracture.
- Each year at least 300,000 older people are hospitalized for hip fractures.
- More than 95% of hip fractures are caused by falling, usually by falling sideways.

Source: [cdc.gov/falls/facts.html](https://www.cdc.gov/falls/facts.html)

IHS INJURY PREVENTION

Our Mission

Raise the health status of American Indians and Alaska Natives to the highest possible level by decreasing the incidence of severe injuries and death to the lowest possible level and increasing the ability of tribes to address their injury problems.

About IHS Injury Prevention

We are the lead IHS program to address the injury disparities in AI/AN communities. Our widely-recognized program works with tribes and partners to reduce the disproportionate impact of injuries on Indian people.



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For more information about the dangers of falling, visit our website at www.ihs.gov/injuryprevention/ or scan the QR code.

