AT HOME FALL RISK ASSESSMENT

(each “no” answer indicates a need for a change in your home or your habits)

HEALTH HABITS

Exercise

Y □  N □ Do you bend and stretch every day? *(this helps keep your joints, tendons and ligaments flexible.)*

Y □  N □ Are you physically active? *(this is important to promote good muscle tone and balance.)*

Y □  N □ Do you walk briskly or perform another type of weight-bearing exercise at least three times a week for 30 minutes or more each time? *(This helps your bones stay strong.)*

Sight & Sound

Y □  N □ Do you have your hearing tested regularly?

Y □  N □ If hearing aids have been recommended for you, do you use them appropriately?

Y □  N □ Do you have earwax build-up removed regularly?

Y □  N □ If you wear prescription glasses, is your prescription up to date?

Y □  N □ If you wear bi-focals, are you comfortable when you look down while standing and walking?

Nutrition & Health

Y □  N □ Do you get enough rest for your body and mind to be alert?

Y □  N □ Do you have regular health screenings?

Y □  N □ Have you asked your doctor if you have any medical conditions that might make you more likely to fall? If you have such a condition, have you asked your doctor what you can do about it?

Y □  N □ If you are often dizzy or lightheaded, have you asked your doctor if it could be a side effect of any medication you take?

Y □  N □ Are any medications you take weakening your bones? *(ask your doctor)*
Are you getting enough calcium and weight-bearing exercise to help prevent osteoporosis? *(Osteoporosis is a condition in which the bones become brittle and break easily).*

To avoid unsafe interactions between the medications you use, do you talk with your pharmacist before you buy an over-the-counter medicine?

If you drink alcohol, do you drink only a little or moderate amount? *(Alcohol disturbs normal balance and reflexes)*

If you drink even a little alcohol, do you know if it is creating any unsafe interactions with your medications?

**GETTING AROUND**

Do you take time to regain your balance when you sit up after lying down or when you stand up after sitting?

Do you wear supportive, rubber-soled, low-heeled shoes? Do you avoid wearing slippers or smooth-soled shoes on stairs and waxed floors? Do your slippers fit well, and do they have soles that provide traction? *(It is unsafe to walk in stocking feet.)*

If you occasionally feel dizzy, do you use a cane, walking stick or walker to help keep your balance on uneven or unfamiliar ground?

Do you watch for slippery pavement when walking outdoors? Do you watch for slippery pavement when you get into or out of cars or buses?

Are you alert to unexpected hazards in your path, such as out-of-place furniture, toys and pets?

Do you avoid walking on stairs or uneven surfaces in poorly lit public places, such as theaters?

When you carry bulky packages, do you make sure that you can see clearly around them?

When you must carry a large load up or down stairs, do you divide it into smaller loads, leaving one hand free to grasp the railing?

Do you avoid rushing to answer the phone or doorbell?

Do you avoid rushing to cross streets, especially in wet or icy weather?

Do you always use a step stool (never a chair) when you have to reach high places?

If you start to fall, do you know how to reduce your risk of injury?

If you live alone, do you contact a friend, neighbor or relative every day? *(If you
**HOME HAZARDS**

### Entrances

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<tr>
<td>1. Are your stairs and walkways well-lighted?</td>
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<td>2. Do your stairs and have sturdy, easy-to-grip railings?</td>
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<td>3. Are your outdoor stairs and walkways free to cracks, dips and holes?</td>
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### Living Areas

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<td>1. Can you turn on a light without having to walk into a dark room?</td>
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<td>2. Does your favorite chair have armrests that are long enough to help you get up and sit down?</td>
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<td>3. Are chairs and tables stable enough to support your weight if you lean on them?</td>
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<td>4. Are small rugs and floor runners secured with carpet tape or nonskid backing?</td>
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*(Rugs and runners are a major cause of falls. They should be fastened down with perfectly flat edges. Better yet, remove them altogether.)*

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<tr>
<td>5. Are walkways kept clear of things that could trip you, such as cords, low furniture and toys?</td>
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### Kitchen

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<td>1. Do you use nonskid wax, no wax, or well-secured carpeting on the floors?</td>
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<td>2. If you use floor mats, do they have backing that grips?</td>
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<td>3. Can you reach the things you use most often without using a step stool?</td>
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<td>4. Is the lighting bright enough for you to see well, but not bright enough to cause a glare?</td>
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### Halls & Stairs

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<td>1. Can you clearly see the outline of each step as you go up and down? <em>Each step can be marked with brightly colored adhesive tape strips. Don’t use shag carpets, deep-pile carpets, or carpets with busy patterns on stairs.</em></td>
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<td>2. Are there lights and light switches at both the top and bottom of the stairs?</td>
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<td>3. Do all stairways have securely fastened handrails on both sides of the stairwell? *Rails</td>
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should extend beyond the top and bottom steps, and the ends should turn in.)

Y □ N □ Does your hand wrap easily and completely around the rail? (Rails should be round and be anchored one to two inches away from the walls.)

Y □ N □ Do stairs have even surfaces with no metal strips or rubber mats to trip you?

Y □ N □ Are stairs kept free of clutter?

Bathroom

Y □ N □ Do the tub and shower have rubber mats, nonskid strips or nonskid surfaces?

Y □ N □ Do you have a grab bar on the wall or side of the tub or shower? (If balance or weakness is a problem, you should use a bath seat).

Y □ N □ Is the floor safe? (If it’s slippery or has loose tiles or rugs, it’s risky)

Y □ N □ Can you get on and off the toilet easily? (If not, you should have a raised toilet seat installed and grab rail fastened into the wall studs next to the toilet)

Y □ N □ Do you hold onto grab bars when you get into or out of the tub or shower?

Bedroom

Y □ N □ Do you keep a light or flashlight within easy reach of your bed?

Y □ N □ Does a night-light brighten your path to the bathroom?

Again, where you answered “no” to any question, is a fall risk. Be proactive about fall prevention and take steps now to prevent a fall later.

IF YOU FALL:

- **Call for help.** Keep a telephone and emergency phone numbers on a low table. If you can’t get up, you may be able to reach a low table.

- **Keep Warm.** While waiting for help, cover up with a blanket, coat or event a rug if that is all you can reach.

- **See a doctor.** Even if you don’t think you’re hurt, always see a doctor after a fall … especially if you don’t know why you fell. Falling can be a sign of illness or problems with medicines you are taking.