People often do not know how serious falls are. Falls can lead to broken hips, head injuries, and traumatic brain injury, which result in hospitalization and sometimes death. People with neurologic problems are at high risk for falling. If you have fallen in the past year when not playing sports or taking part in other activities where falls may be expected, it is likely that you will fall again. This fact sheet will help you and your family understand your risk for falls. Falls are often preventable.

Neurologists from the American Academy of Neurology are doctors who treat diseases of the brain and nervous system. The following information is provided by experts in neurology who carefully reviewed all of the available scientific studies identifying patients with both neurologic and general conditions that put them at the greatest risk of falls.

How likely are falls for people with my neurologic disorder?
People who are at highest risk are people with:
- Stroke
- Dementia
- Walking and balance problems
- A history of recent falls
or people who use walking aids, such as a cane or walker.

People who are probably at increased risk are those with:
- Parkinson disease
- Nerve damage
- Weakness or loss of feeling in the legs

What else can cause or increase my risk for falls?
Other factors include the following:
- Advanced age
- Age-related frailty
- Muscle weakness
- Arthritis
- Trouble with activities of daily living
- Depression
- Memory and thinking troubles
- Use of medicines such as sleeping aids and antidepressants

Are there tests that my doctor can use to identify if I am likely to fall?
There are several simple tests that can be very helpful, such as the:
- Get-Up-and-Go test
- Timed Get-Up-and-Go test
- Tinetti mobility scale

What can my doctor do to help me reduce my risk of falling?
Your doctor can work with you to:
- Treat any underlying medical problems
- Adjust your medication(s)
- Start an exercise program
- Get walking and balance training
- Get training in use of walking aids, such as canes and walkers
- Assess and modify your home environment for safety from falls

Talk to Your Neurologist
Talk to your doctor if you have fallen or if you feel that you might fall. Ask your doctor about what you can do to prevent falls.
This is an educational service of the American Academy of Neurology (AAN). It is designed to provide members with evidence-based guideline recommendations to assist with decision-making in patient care. It is based on an assessment of current scientific and clinical information and is not intended to exclude any reasonable alternative methodologies. The AAN recognizes that specific patient care decisions are the prerogative of the patient and the physicians caring for the patient, based on the circumstances involved. Physicians are encouraged to carefully review the full AAN guidelines so they understand all recommendations associated with care of their patients.

*After the experts review all of the published research studies, they describe the strength of the evidence supporting each recommendation:*

- **Strong evidence** = more than one high-quality scientific study
- **Good evidence** = at least one high-quality scientific study or two or more studies of a lesser quality
- **Weak evidence** = the studies, while supportive, are weak in design or strength of the findings
- **Not enough evidence** = either different studies have come to conflicting results or there are no studies of reasonable quality

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