



Reducing Fall Risk At Home: A Perspective For Cancer Survivors

The National Institute on Aging reports that six out of every 10 falls occur inside the home.

During social distancing we are all spending more time at home. Because of this, it is important to assess your individual fall risk and identify potential hazards in the home. The American Cancer Society notes that cancer survivors are 25-30% more likely to have a fall than the general population. There are two factors to consider when assessing fall risk, the first being intrinsic factors, these are directly related to the individual. The second group is extrinsic factors these are things in our environment. Cancer survivors add another group of factors from treatment side effects. Here are a few common factors from each category and ways to mitigate hazards in your environment. Please note, this is not an all inclusive list.

Intrinsic Factors:

- > 65 years of age
- History of falls
- Gait and/or balance deficits
- Taking > three medications daily
- Decreased vision
- Dizziness upon standing
- Multiple comorbidities
- Incontinence
- Fear of falling

Cancer Treatment Side Effects:

- Chemo-induced peripheral neuropathy
- Chemo-induced cognitive deficits “chemo brain”
- Fatigue
- Deconditioning
- Generalized weakness
- Vertigo
- Decreased range of motion post surgery or radiation

Reduce household hazards:

- Assure proper lighting- use automatic night lights
- Remove clutter from walkways
- Regular vision check ups
- Use assistive device when needed
- Non-slip mats in shower, and/or shower chair

- Sturdy hand rails along stairs, showers and toilets
- Secure area rugs or remove them
- Watch for small pets
- Secure power cords
- Stay active