

# Vision loss and falls risk

Individuals with vision problems are more than twice as likely to fall as people without vision problems.

Vision problems can affect balance, the ability to walk, and upper and lower body strength.

## How Vision Loss Increases Fall Risk:

Eye diseases (such as glaucoma, cataracts, macular degeneration, diabetic retinopathy) and normal age-related vision changes can cause:

### Vision Problems

- Blurry or distorted vision
- Sensitivity to bright lights/glare
- Difficulty seeing objects
- Problems seeing edges and changes in surfaces
- Difficulty seeing at night
- Problems judging depth and distances

## Effects of Vision Loss

- Difficulty maintaining balance
- Shuffling or problems walking
- Difficulty seeing clutter or obstacles
- Difficulty going up and down stairs, steps, and curbs
- Reduced activity, leading to decreased strength and balance

## Ways to Reduce Vision-Related Fall Risks:

- Have eye check-ups at least every two years and whenever your vision changes.



## Vision and falls risk

- Share concerns you have about your vision with your doctor or optician as many impairments to vision are correctable.
- If you wear glasses or contact lenses, make sure your prescriptions are up-to-date.

### Check your home for safety hazards and make necessary changes:

- Adjust lighting so it is bright enough to see, but does not cause glare.
- Mark edges of stairs with bright high-contrast strips or paint.
- Keep floors clear of clutter; secure throw rugs and electrical cords.
- Add nightlights to the path from bedroom to bathroom.
- Keep frequently used items close by.
- If you wear eyeglasses and still have trouble seeing, ask your optician for an appointment

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Ref. British Geriatric Society, (2018) and Falls Prevention Centre of Excellence