

# Let's Talk About Falls!

Talking is one of the easiest ways to create awareness and spark action. You don't have to be a falls expert to talk with your friends, your family, or your neighbors about falls. Falls are serious but talking about them doesn't have to be.

## Tips to Talk About Falls

- **Be open and kind:** Ask questions, share a fact, or share your own experience.
- **Avoid blame:** Nobody is at fault for a fall! Provide solutions that do not make the person feel judged.
- **Be assertive:** Show that you care by how you deliver your message. Use "I" statements to let others know how you are thinking and feeling.
- **Listen:** Sometimes no solution will make an older adult feel better about falling. Be there and listen to their concerns and give support when they are ready for the next step in reducing falls.



## Here are some reasons why you should talk about falls and ways you can start the conversation:

### Enhance Relationships

Falls can be embarrassing and hard to talk about. But talking with others about them shows you care and are a source of support. It also makes future talks about falls easier.

- **Ask a question:** "Have you or anyone you know had a fall or trip?"
- **Share a fact:** "I was surprised to learn that falls are the leading cause of traumatic brain injuries. Falls are more serious than I thought!"
- **Share your experience:** "My neighbor fell when he climbed a ladder to change the smoke detector battery. I wish he had called me. I would have been more than happy to help."

## Create Opportunity

Knowing the risk factors for falls is just as important as knowing how to prevent them. Talking about falls helps people understand the various falls risk factors and the things they can do to reduce that risk.

- **Ask a question:** "I've noticed you've been holding onto the railings as you walk. Are you feeling unsteady on your feet?"
- **Share a fact:** "I learned that most falls occur in the home. I didn't realize that small changes, such as putting in brighter lightbulbs, could make such a difference."
- **Share your experience:** "My eyes have trouble adjusting in the dark. I got a nightlight for the hallway to help guide my way back to bed after using the bathroom at night."

## Foster Connections

Falls are common and, unfortunately, most everyone has been impacted in some way. Talking about falls can foster connections to people, programs, and services in the community for support.



- **Ask a question:** "I was amazed by how many different types of exercise classes are offered at the local senior center. Where do you go to exercise?"
- **Share a fact:** "Our local senior center knows all the programs and services that are available here in town. They can even help you find a program and register for one!"
- **Share your experience:** "I was given a medication after a procedure, but it made me feel so dizzy. I told the pharmacist about my symptoms, and they helped me change the dose."

**To learn more about falls prevention, visit [ncoa.org/falls](https://ncoa.org/falls)**