

Stay Healthy and On Your Feet

Medications that increase your risk of having a fall

If you are 65 or older, regularly review your medication list with your health care provider and pharmacist. Many medications have side effects that may increase your risk of having a fall. Consider treatment options that do not involve medications for issues such as difficulty sleeping. These approaches may be safer and more effective. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends working with your health care provider to:

- **STOP** taking unnecessary medications.
- **SWITCH** to safer medications.
- **REDUCE** medication dosages to the lowest effective dose.

These medications may increase your risk of falling:

- **Over-the-counter medications that contain antihistamines:**
Allergy medications such as diphenhydramine (Benadryl), chlorpheniramine (Chlor-Trimeton), and doxylamine (Unisom); cold, cough, or pain products that contain antihistamines such as Nyquil, Tylenol PM, and Advil PM.
- **Medications for depression, anxiety, or sleep:**
Amitriptyline (Elavil); benzodiazepines like clonazepam (Klonopin), lorazepam (Ativan), temazepam (Restoril); or “Z” drugs for sleep like eszopiclone (Lunesta), zolpidem (Ambien), and zaleplon (Sonata).
- **Medications for your bowel and bladder:** Dicyclomine (Bentyl), oxybutynin (Ditropan), and tolterodine (Detrol).
- **Muscle relaxants:** Cyclobenzaprine (Flexeril) and methocarbamol (Robaxin).
- **Other medications:**
 - Blood pressure medications that make you feel dizzy or woozy.
 - Seizure medications that affect your balance.
 - Narcotic pain medications that make you feel sleepy or drowsy.

References

https://www.cdc.gov/steady/pdf/steady_medication_linked_to_falls_rev7-a.pdf
http://www.healthinaging.org/files/documents/tipsheets/meds_to_avoid.pdf