When a Fall Is a Warning Sign

What Caregivers Should Know

Falls in older adults are often treated as **isolated accidents**, but they frequently signal an underlying medical issue.

A fall can be an **early warning sign** that something else is developing.

A Fall Is Often a Symptom

Many falls happen because something has changed in the body.

Possible underlying causes include:

- Infection
- Medication side effects
- Dehydration
- Blood pressure changes
- Worsening chronic illness
- Balance or neurological problems

Understanding the cause is just as important as treating the injury.

Warning Signs After a Fall

After a fall, watch for symptoms that may indicate a deeper issue.

These include:

- Confusion or unusual behavior
- Increasing weakness
- Difficulty walking
- Headache or dizziness
- Nausea or vomiting
- Pain that worsens over time

These symptoms should be evaluated by a healthcare professional.

Falls That Should Always Be Evaluated

Medical evaluation is especially important if:

• The person hit their head
• There was a loss of consciousness
• The fall was unexplained
• Walking ability suddenly worsened
• There are new neurological symptoms

Even if the person seems fine initially, symptoms can develop later.

Questions Caregivers Should Consider

After a fall, it can help to ask:

• Did anything change recently?
• Were medications adjusted?
• Was there dizziness beforehand?
• Has the person been eating and drinking normally?
• Has walking or balance worsened recently?

These clues can help identify the underlying cause.

Key Reminder

A fall is often **a signal that something has changed medically**.

Understanding why the fall happened can help prevent future injuries and identify health problems earlier.