

Prevent Senior Fall Injuries

Did you know that falls are the leading cause of injury for people over the age of 25? In seniors over 65, fall-related injuries are still the leading cause of death.

Falls pose a threat to independence for many older adults, and many seniors have a great fear of falling because they see the fall as the beginning sign that they may lose their independence. Nearly two-thirds of older adults admitted to hospitals for fall-related injuries are not sent home, instead they are discharged to nursing homes or assisted living centers.

However, many of the risks that lead to falls, such as household, medical, and nutritional considerations can be easily reduced or eliminated.

Household Considerations

- Install grab bars in bath and shower stalls.
- Use a non-slip mat or adhesive decals in bath or shower stalls.
- Use only non-skid bath mats and area rugs.
- Use nightlights to help light hallways and bathrooms during nighttime hours. Turn on the lights before entering a dark room.
- Wipe up any spills immediately.
- Keep stairways and steps clear of all objects.
- Use handrails on stairways/step no matter how short the travel distance is.
- Wear footwear with traction. Avoid wearing socks or smooth-soled slippers.
- Keep the outside of your home free of ice and snow. Check your outside walkways and drive for broken or loose concrete/bricks.

Medicinal Considerations

- Follow medication dosages closely. Using multiple medications and/or using medications incorrectly may cause dizziness, weakness and other side effects which can lead to a dangerous fall.
- If your medication changes in type or dosage, be aware that it may affect your ability to walk or drive.

Nutritional Considerations

- A diet rich in calcium will help strengthen bones and muscles. A lack of calcium may lead to brittle bones and lack of body coordination.
- Keep hydrated by drinking 6-8 glasses of water a day. Dehydration can lead to dizziness.
- Exercise regularly to keep joints stretched and muscles strong to aid in coordination.

New alarm technologies have also allowed many older adults to remain independent but remain monitored in case of a fall or other debilitating accident. For information on home monitoring companies ask your doctor or perform a search on the Internet for “Senior Monitoring”.