



FALL PREVENTION GUIDE

This guide is intended to provide information on handling falls for people who either require assistance or provide care to a loved one. The specific objectives include:

- Identification of external and internal factors that cause Seniors to fall
- Recommendations to prevent falls
- Instructions on how to get up properly if a fall occurs.

When Seniors Fall

Falls lead to serious & fatal injuries. As a result they create serious or fatal consequences for Seniors and their families, including a loss of Senior's independence.

Did you know?

- If you are over 75 years old, the likelihood of falling is much greater.
- 70% of Accidental Deaths in people over the age of 75 result from falls.
- 40 percent of all nursing home admissions are attributable to repeated falls at home.
- 1 out of 3 seniors who lives independently at home will experience a major fall each year.
- 25% of seniors who suffer hip fractures die within one year.
- Falling, or the fear of falling leads to loss of confidence, isolation and immobility.
- Seniors think that if they don't move or go anywhere they can't fall.
- However, Seniors who sit a lot are at greater risk of falling because sitting makes muscles and ligaments flabby and joints stiffen, bones lose strength

There are many external factors that can lead to falls. Some of these include:

- Four or more medications
- Poor lighting
- Unstable chairs
- Steep stairs
- Loose carpets
- Lack of bathroom safety equipment

And there are internal factors as well.

- Weakness/ tightness in muscles
- Low blood pressure "head rushes"
- Macular Degeneration
- Peripheral Neuropathy
- Neurological Diseases (prior stroke)
- Diabetes
- Osteoarthritis of the knees or hips
- Osteoporosis - bone mass or density is less than expected for a person of a given age
 - 65 years and over
 - Thin
 - Female
 - White or Asian
 - Early onset of menopause
 - Low calcium diet
 - Lack of exercise



Things you can do to prevent falls.

- Do a Brown Bag Review/Pharmacist review of all meds
- Have vision and hearing exams every year
- Tell your doctor about:
 - Any weakness, pain or problems with your legs or feet
 - Any Falls in the past year - especially if you've fallen 2 + times in the past 6 months
- Eliminate unsafe clothing and footwear:
 - Wear well-fitting slippers with non-slip soles
 - Avoid clothing that drags on the floor
- "Head rushes" when you stand too quickly? Rise slowly and count to 5
- Trouble getting in & out of the bathtub?
 - Add grab bars to shower walls
 - Use a bath chair & hand-held shower
 - Use non-slip tub mats

Things to consider in your home.

- Throw rugs?
 - Tape down or remove
- Stairs without rails?
 - Add handrails
- Clutter in your walking space?
 - Keep walkways clear
- Dark hallways or stairwells?
 - Add nightlights where overhead lighting is lacking and in bathrooms and hallways
 - Keep a charged flashlight near your bed
- Injury's henchmen: Hypothermia & Dehydration!
 - Fall Survival Kit - Store a small blanket and a bottle of water in each room you typically occupy.

If you fall –

- DO NOT PANIC.
- REMAIN CALM.
- DO NOT ATTEMPT TO GET UP IF YOU THINK YOU ARE INJURED.

If you are hurt –

- Use personal emergency response system, if wearing one
- If no alarm, call out for help or slide to the telephone and dial 911
- Move to a soft surface such as a carpet if you have fallen on a concrete, tile or wooden floor
- Keep yourself warm until help arrives
- Move in ways that don't cause pain
 - to avoid pressure sores
 - to help maintain body temperature

If you are NOT hurt –

- Roll onto stomach and attempt to get to hands and knees



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- Crawl to stable piece of furniture (bed, stool, chair without rollers)
- Approach support from front and place both hands on surface
- With both hands on support, place foot of stronger leg flat on floor
- Lean forward as you begin to push yourself up with your hands while bringing your feet side-by-side
- Slowly turn and sit on the support
- Collect yourself before attempting to get up again

Your risk of debilitating falls increase as your risk factors increase. What can you do? Call us for a:

- A FREE Fall Risk Assessment and score
- A FREE Home Safety Inspection

In conclusion, falls are serious to Seniors and their Families and after they happen, it may be too late to help return the injured to their previous quality of life. Since falls can be prevented, call Good Samaritan today and let them help you minimize your risk.