

## FALL PREVENTION TIPS

- Avoid walking in slippery shoes, socks, slippers, high-heeled shoes, or shoes with little support.
- Avoid scatter rugs and slippery or cluttered floors. Keep in mind the differences in floor levels and thresholds. Be sure all carpeting, especially on stairs, is securely tacked down.
- Use extra caution when walking while wearing bifocals. If possible, take off bifocals when going up or down stairs.
- Light all stairwells and put handrails on both sides.
- When climbing stairs, keep one arm free to hold the railing. Make multiple trips when carrying items like groceries.
- Use grab bars in the tub, shower, and next to the toilet.
- Use a rubber mat in the tub or shower.
- Place a plastic chair with a back and nonskid leg tips in the shower if unsteadiness is a problem.
- Keep flashlights with batteries next to the bed and in convenient locations throughout the house.
- Use nightlights. Pack nightlights for traveling.
- Replace floor lamps with ceiling fixtures or voice- or sound-activated lamps. Use the brightest light bulbs that are allowed by the fixture's safety recommendations.

- Reorganize work areas to avoid reaching or bending. Step stools should have handrails or wide steps.
- Carry a portable phone from room to room to take incoming calls or call for help if necessary.
- Arrange to make contact with a relative or friend daily. Tell someone where you are at all times.
- Contract with a monitoring company if you are ill or older and live alone.
- Be aware of medication side effects.
- Have regular hearing and vision tests.
- If you feel you are about to fall, try to sit down since the soft tissues of the buttocks help protect against hip fractures.
- Many falls occur at home because people trip while walking or while getting up too quickly from sitting.
- Keep the temperature in the house at a comfortable temperature. Extremely hot or cold temperatures often make people dizzy.
- Get up slowly after eating, resting or sleeping. Straighten posture and stand still for several moments before beginning to move.
- Those with illnesses that affect circulation, sensation or mobility are more susceptible to dizzy spells.

- Medications such as blood pressure pills, heart medications, sedatives, antidepressants, tranquilizers and muscle relaxants can also cause dizziness.
- If you begin to fall, immediately try to sit on your buttocks. The soft tissue of the buttocks provides some cushion against hip fracture.
- Have vision and hearing tests regularly. As aging takes place, reflexes slow and a simple act such as bending may throw some people off balance.
- Regular exercise helps to maintain muscle tone, balance and enhance reflexes, providing further protection against falls.
- Wear shoes that provide firm traction and provide stable ankle support. Keep the feet in contact with the ground and keep the weight on the balls of the feet.
- For areas that get snow and ice, try carrying a little rock salt or kitty litter in your pocket or car to spread on the pavement before walking.
- For rainy areas, be careful on slippery wet floors, driveways, sidewalks and streets.
- Use a winter-tipped cane or walker for added stability.
- Beware of highly polished floors that are slippery when wet. Always walk on plastic or carpet runners.