

# Living In A Safer Home

*A guide to independence and avoiding falls.*



With the continued increase in health costs, it is more important now than ever for individuals to focus on prevention of illness and injury. There are many ways seniors can make daily tasks safer and easier like exercise, home safety and knowledge of what can be done to insure a safer place to live.

## Did You Know?

- More than 30% of seniors fall each year.
- Two-thirds of those who fall will fall again within the next six months.
- The chance of falls increase drastically with age and illness.
- 20% to 30% of those who fall suffer moderate to serious injuries.
- There is a 1 in 7 chance of a fall within 30 days of discharge from a healthcare facility and a 1 in 8 chance of readmission due to a fall within the first 30 days after the initial discharge.

## Why are we more prone to falls after being discharged?

“Prolonged bed rest during hospitalization or rehabilitation predisposes patients to declines in balance; strength and bone mass that is thought to contribute to falls and fractures after discharge”



## 40% of ALL FALLS Are Preventable.

(Consumer Product Safety Council)

### 10 Simple Steps to Avoid Falls

**Be aware of your surroundings and how you feel** – use a cane or walker if it has been prescribed. Walk slowly and deliberately and if you don't feel well ask someone to help you.



**Get plenty of rest, proper nutrition and hydration** – follow the advice of your doctor, discharge planners and caregivers and be sure to eat properly and drink plenty of water.

**Simplify** – Make your environment safer – get rid of anything that could make you trip or fall like clutter, excess furniture etc. Arrange furniture so you have a clear pathway between rooms. Remove low coffee tables, magazine racks, footstools and plants from pathways.



**Avoid Trip-Ups** – Remove floor hazards like area rugs, extension cords or other things that create obstacles in your path.

**Make sure** you have 36 inches to 42 inches clearance in your walking path.

**Hold on** to steady furniture if you are unsteady on your feet.

**Pay close attention to the FALL trouble spots** – Be aware that 45% of all household injuries take place in the bathroom and 20% take place in the kitchen. Avoid falls by equipping these areas with grab bars near sinks, toilets and showers. Wear safe footwear – make sure that the soles of your shoes are not worn, that could cause you to slip. If you wear slippers around the house make sure they have rubber soles.



**Exercise** – Ask your primary care physician or discharge planner to prescribe an appropriate exercise plan for you to help you improve balance, gait, and muscle tone.



**Keep your home well lit** – A dark home is a dangerous home. Make sure that all of the areas you walk in are illuminated at all times of the day and evening. Especially areas you traverse frequently like pathways to and from the bathroom, bedroom and kitchen. Keep a flashlight handy at all times in case the power fails.

**Take medication as directed** – on time and only the dosage prescribed. Do not skip medications. Report any side effects or negative reactions you experience to your primary care physician. Remember failure to properly take medication is a major cause of falls and fall related injuries.



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