

FALL PREVENTION

Don't let your next trip be a fall! You Have A Choice!

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INTRODUCTION

Falls can change your life. They are more common than strokes and can be just as serious in their consequences in fact falls and the resulting injuries have become one of the elderly's most serious health issues. And as our senior population continues to grow, falls and their consequences will increase in the future. Yet this accident is one of the most preventable causes of needing nursing home placement. There needs to be made an awareness of how to prevent these falls in the first place.

WHO IS AT RISK

Elderly adults are at the highest risk for falls. More than one in three people age 65 years or older fall each year. Falls are not an inevitable part of getting older; however the risk of falling increases with age. Diabetes and heart disease affect balance. So do problems with circulation, thyroid or nervous systems.

Older woman, especially Caucasians and Asians are at higher risk. Seniors who are unable to stand on one leg for more than five seconds and people taking multiple prescriptions and over the counter drugs are at a greater risk. And elderly people who live alone.

STATISTICS

Falls are the leading cause of fatal and nonfatal injuries to older people in the U.S. Each year, more than 11 million people older than 65 fall - one of every three senior citizens. In 2004, the most recent year statistics are available, almost 15,000 people 65 and older died from falls and about 1.9 million were treated for injuries in emergency rooms, said Judy Stevens, an epidemiologist with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

- 3 in 10 fall each year
- 2 in 10 who need home health care after being in the hospital will fall during the first month after coming home
- 1 in 10 suffer a serious fall injury such as a broken bone or head injury
- 5 in 10 have problems getting up without help after they have fallen

- Falls cause over 90% of broken hips; only half of those who break their hip will get around like they did before their broken hip
- In the United States, 16 percent of all Emergency Department visits and almost 7 percent of all hospitalizations are for fall-related injuries
- Where do falls occur?
- 60 percent: home
- 30 percent: community
- 10 percent: in institutions, such as nursing homes

WHAT ARE THE MOST COMMON CAUSES OF FALLS

Falls can occur anytime, anyplace, and to anyone while doing everyday activities such as climbing stairs or getting out of a bathtub or shower.

Many diseases affect the central nervous system CNS and sense organs. Hardening of the arteries (atherosclerosis) is probably the worst; it is accelerated by hypertension, smoking, and diabetes.

The most common health problems attributing to falling are:

- Problems walking or moving around
- Vertigo
- Peripheral neuropathy
- 4 or more medications
- Foot problems, unsafe footwear
- Blood pressure drops too much on standing up/dizzy
- Problems with seeing
- Tripping hazards in your home

WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES/IMPACT FROM FALLS

Every year more than two million Americans fall and sustain serious injury, costing in excess of \$3 billion dollars. Hidden costs include pain, disability, lawsuits, deterioration in general well-being, and the impact on other family members.

Falls are the leading cause of fatal and nonfatal injuries to older people in the U.S., affecting their physical and mental well-being. At least one-tenth of falls result in serious injury to soft tissues or bones.

A fall can cause a fracture, head injury, or other problem that can change a person's life. Fractures caused by falls can lead to hospital stays and disability. They can also prevent a person from getting around, doing daily tasks, or socializing. Most often, fall-related fractures are in the person's hip, pelvis, spine, arm, hand, or ankle.

Fear of falling again can cause problems. A person who has fallen may avoid doing daily tasks or enjoyable activities. This fear can also cause the person to spend more time at home, away from other people.

One of the more serious fall-related injuries among older adults is hip fractures. These fractures are a leading cause of medical problems, loss of independence and death. Only half of older adults hospitalized for a broken hip will be able to get around as they did before the hip fracture. Many will need long-term care, and a leading cause of death.

WHAT IS FALL PREVENTION

Fall prevention is a means to educate people to be aware of the potentially hazardous environments and activities that attribute to falls. How to prevent falls by being pro-active and making changes in life style, (including exercise and physical therapy) and living environments. To be aware of medical conditions that might increase the risk of falls in order to help minimize the risk. Many of all falls could be completely prevented.

- Many of the health problems that increase the chance of falling are known and are treatable.
- Common, treatable health problems and hazards include problems with walking or moving around, medications, foot problems or unsafe footwear, blood pressure dropping too much on getting up, problems seeing, and tripping hazards at home.

The good news is that you can decrease the chance of falling by improving these problems. A study conducted in Connecticut, funded by the National Institute on Aging , found that treating as many of these problems as possible decreased the likelihood of falling

WHY TRY PHYSICAL THERAPY FIRST

GO CLARA!!