

Fall Prevention for Older Adults

Know the risks, including clutter and medications, and learn what you can do to keep serious falls from happening.



A National Lutheran Community

If you watched the video on fall prevention with B.J. Custer, one of our directors of rehabilitation, you learned that some of the most important factors for preventing a fall in your home have to do with simple issues that require simple fixes. Some of those include:

- Using the proper assistive device when indoors and outdoors
- Removing tripping hazards in your apartment (i.e., throw rugs, bulky furniture)
- Applying anti-skid tub-stickers
- Avoiding “furniture walking” on loose items (like a stack of books)
- Maintaining a well-lit home and adequate lighting for walking at nighttime

These are common-sense practices that only require slight adjustments in our routines to accomplish. And the payoff is worth it: the CDC estimates that one out of every five falls among older adults results in a serious injury, such as a broken bone or a head injury. More than 95% of hip fractures are caused by falls, and falling once can lead to a fear of falling that can cause an individual to limit the otherwise safe everyday activities that they love. By being less active, they become weaker, and actually set themselves up for future falls.

Now that we've addressed the areas of the home that can be made safer for older adults at risk of falls, what other steps can we take to make our lifestyles less fall-prone?

- **Review your list of medications with your doctor or pharmacist.** Some prescriptions, like blood thinners or beta blockers, can cause dizziness.
- **Strengthen your lower body.** Exercises to promote balance and stability will help you to stay upright and to right yourself if you feel a fall about to happen. Tai Chi can do wonders for balance, and is a popular low-impact exercise for older adults.
- **Have your eyes checked.** Yearly eye doctor appointments are a must for older adults: make sure your prescription is up-to-date if you wear eye glasses, and make sure you're aware if your lenses make objects appear closer or farther away than they are in reality.

Falls can be a traumatic and consequential event in an older adult's life, and can lead to a loss of independence that is largely preventable. Make sure you and your loved ones know the risks and take steps toward keeping them minor in impact and rare in occurrence.



Call 301-355-2801 or visit: www.thevillageatrockville.org

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