



FALL PREVENTION – HELPFUL HINTS

1. Use the fall risk factor checklist and maximally address your risk factors
2. Manage your medications
 - a. Keep a COMPLETE list of all your medications and give an updated copy to each of your doctors when your medications change and/or you visit your doctor
 - b. Review medications with your doctor and attempt to modify them if taking ≥ 4 medications or if you are having side effects
 - c. Try to get all medications from same pharmacy to help catch drug interactions
 - d. Initial 15 days on new meds is most critical period for side effects – be aware.
3. Environmental Hazards
 - a. Maintain plenty of lighting. Keep path to bathroom illuminated with night lights or turn on lights when you go to bathroom; light switch should be within easy reach from bed
 - b. Remove CLUTTER – keep pathways clear
 - c. Use non-slip surfaces (strips, rubber bottom mats) in bathroom
 - d. Dry off before leaving shower area – do not drip water on floor. Use grab bars in and outside shower and near toilet if you need to hold onto something
 - e. Place frequently used items within EASY reach; squat instead of bending your back
 - f. Replace/modify furniture if too difficult to arise from chair/sofa safely. If you are too weak to arise from a chair easily, begin a strengthening program also.
 - g. Remove or tack down area rugs; tack down electrical cords and keep them out of your walking path
 - h. Ensure telephone or emergency call button is within easy reach from floor
 - i. Pets – train or restrain dangerous pets
4. Safe Habits
 - a. Get close to objects before lifting. Do not reach beyond arm length. Use a reacher if you have difficulty getting items from low surfaces.
 - b. To avoid lightheadedness or dizziness, sit at edge of bed for 1 minute before arising
 - c. Wear supportive, sturdy shoes – do not walk in bare feet or loose slippers
 - d. Pay attention to what you are doing when you are moving – avoid multi-tasking
 - e. Allow enough time – do not rush; call for help if you need it
 - f. Use signs or reminder lists to stay organized
 - g. Get up and down from seats safely – align your body with the seat before sitting down and scoot to edge of seat before standing up. If you need to hold onto something, use the SEAT and NOT your walker
5. Health Matters
 - a. Have vision & hearing aids checked yearly and your ears cleaned of wax regularly
 - b. If you have dizziness or feel depressed, report it to your doctor
 - c. Eat a balanced diet and drink plenty of fluid (8 8oz glasses per day), unless instructed not to do so by your doctor (mostly only for kidney patients)
 - d. Post-hospitalization – move carefully, be aware of changes in your abilities, ask for help if you need it, have a home safety check BEFORE returning home
 - e. EXERCISE regularly to address BALANCE, bladder, strength, flexibility and endurance losses that come with aging. Exercise also improves many health conditions. See a physical therapist to start a program if you need help.
 - f. Get a good night sleep – if you are not sleeping, talk to your doctor
 - g. Control napping – 20-30 min. at a time so that you can still sleep at night
 - h. Manage depression – talk to your doctor, seek counseling if appropriate.
 - i. Use alcohol responsibly or get treatment if you cannot manage it yourself.