



Focus on *Balance* and *Fall Prevention*

Fall Facts

- 25% of persons aged 65 to 74, and a third of those over 75, will report a fall
- Falls: – Result in 200,000 hip fractures a year
 - Are often associated with limiting physical and social activities and increasing dependence
 - Can be avoided with simple changes, they are not a normal part of aging
- Injury is leading cause of death among those over age 65

Prevent Falls & Fractures

- Have your vision and hearing tested regularly and properly corrected
- Talk to your pharmacist or doctor about the side effects of drugs you are taking and how they affect your balance and coordination
- Use caution in getting up too quickly after eating or lying down, as low blood pressure may cause dizziness
- Use a cane or walker to help maintain balance on uneven or unfamiliar ground, if you sometimes feel dizzy or short of breath. A physical therapist can assist you in finding a walking aid that's right for you
- Wear: – Supportive, rubber-soled, low-heeled shoes
 - Nightgowns and robes that do not drag on the ground

Exercise

- Physical activity improves strength, muscle tone and flexibility
- Check with your doctor or physical therapist about a suitable exercise program

HOME SAFETY CHECKLIST

Stairs, Halls and Pathways:

- Provide good lighting and remove clutter.
- Thick and/or plush carpet with a pad underneath can become loose and a tripping hazard.
- Consider flat, tightly woven carpet.
- Remove all throw rugs. Even rugs with non-skid backing can get caught up in walkers and become a tripping hazard.
- Ensure hand rails are tightly fastened and run the entire length of stairs with light switches at each end.
- Place night lights in hallways.
- Outfit pets with reflective collars so they're easily visible in dark walking areas.

Bathrooms:

- Place grab bars in and out of tubs and showers and near toilets. NEVER use towel racks as a substitute for grab bars!
- Plastic or rubber tub mats can lose their suction and pose a tripping hazard. Adhesive safety strips are more secure.

Bedrooms:

- Place night lights or install light switches within reach of bed(s).
- Have an easy-to-reach telephone. You may want to consider getting a portable phone or use an emergency call service if you are prone to falls.

Living Areas:

- Place electrical cords and telephone wires out of walking paths.
- Arrange furniture and other objects so they are not in the way. Ensure that couches and chairs are a proper height to get into and out of easily.

Falls and related injuries occur at any age. With a physician's order, Tabitha's physical or occupational therapists can evaluate your strength and balance to make recommendations to increase safety in your home.

