



## Fall Facts & Tips: Reducing the Risk at Home

Research shows that 30% of falls in the elderly population can be prevented through education and intervention. Below are some alarming national statistics as well as tips for preventing falls at home.

### Impact of Falls each Year

- 22 million people have a fear of falling
- 13.3 million people aged 65 years and older fall each year or one-third of this age group. Most falls occur at home.
- 2 million are treated in emergency departments
- 430,000 are hospitalized
- 16,000 die from injuries related to falls
- 40% of nursing home admissions are fall related

### Winter Slips and Falls

- 11,500 are treated in emergency rooms each year for injuries suffered while shoveling snow as reported by The American Journal of Emergency Medicine
  - ✓ 75% men were most frequently hurt ; one third of the injuries are back related
  - ✓ 20% of the injuries were a result of a fall
  - ✓ 1,647 deaths each year are cardiac related when shoveling snow

### Tips for Preventing Falls around the Home

- **Floors:** Repair torn/worn carpeting and linoleum. Make sure rugs are secured to floor. Remove throw rugs – if you must keep them, make sure they are double sided taped down or have nonslip rug pads. Keep furniture in its accustomed place. Replace shag carpeting with low pile carpeting. Clear floors and get rid of clutter.
- **Bathroom:** Install grab bars and nonskid mats in/next to the tub, shower and toilet. Use nonskid mats on floors – or, install wall-to-wall carpeting. Add a shower seat and a hand held shower head with hose. A heightened toilet seat can be very helpful.
- **Kitchen:** Install nonskid rubber mats around sink and stove. Clean up spills immediately. Move frequently used items to a place within easy reach.
- **Stairs:** Ensure rugs and rails are secure, and add a rail on both sides of the stairs for improved support. Steps need to be slip resistant. Add secure carpet runners to hardwood floors.
- **Lighting:** Ensure halls, stairways, and entrances are well lit. Improve lighting with light sensitive nightlights or motion detectors that turn on automatically. Make sure lamps are close and within the reach of the bed.
- **Other:** Keep bedding tucked inside mattress. Rearrange furniture to allow clear path so keep plants, clutter and cords (wii, laptop, cell or smart phone, PlayStation, etc) free from walkways. Paint outside steps with non-slip coating and add rails.

We are happy to provide an informative Falls Prevention presentation to your patients or residents.

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This article is written by Network LIFELINE, the largest Medical Alert Device provider in Western PA. This program delivers extraordinary service to nine counties and offers the cutting-edge **Auto Alert** -- which automatically detects falls, provides peace of mind and assists people with living independently longer. Contact Bob Gordon at 412-779-0696 or Toll Free 866-677-7795.