

Keep Falls Out of Your Fall (Autumn)

One in four adults falls each year. Unexpected falls can result in serious and costly injuries such as broken bones, hip fractures, and head injuries. The average hospital cost of a fall injury is over \$30,000. After a fall, many older adults develop a fear of falling again and limit their activities and social engagements. This results in further physical decline, depression, social isolation, and feelings of helplessness. Additionally, caregivers and family members feel an increased caregiver burden, fear of falling, and depression. Falls can be caused by changes in vision, medication use, environment (perhaps the home needs updating to keep it safer), chronic conditions, and muscle weakness/balance/gait problems. All at ages, taking action to prevent falls is possible. Consider these steps:

1. Do an assessment – what is the risk of falling. See _____ for an assessment tool.
2. Enlist others to help (Doctor, family, and friends)
3. Develop a prevention action plan (this might include having a safety inspection of the home which includes lighting, stairs, bathrooms, kitchen, living areas, entrance ways, and floors, having a vision check-up, or starting an exercise program to improve strength and balance.)
4. Implement the action plan.

Most people think falling is common as we age. However, the truth is that older adults can be improve strength and balance by implementing some simple prevention activities. Prevent falls in your fall season by doing a falls assessment, developing and implementing a falls prevention plan!

Additional information is available on these websites:

www.cdc.gov/steady

www.caregiving.org

[ncoa.org/Falls Prevention](http://ncoa.org/Falls%20Prevention)

References:

National Alliance for Caregiving and National Council on Aging “Falls Prevention Conversation Guide for Caregivers”

BayCare Rehabilitation Services Fall Prevention Home Assessment Chart