

Fall Prevention Tips From Saint Elizabeth Home Care Services

"Falls are not a normal part of aging and there are many risks that can be addressed that will reduce the number of falls in older adults"
---Phyllis Rizzo, director of Saint Elizabeth Home Care Services

The Saint Elizabeth Home Care team is nationally recognized for their program to help prevent falls in elderly and others. Did you know that in a single year, falls have resulted in 460,000 hospitalizations, 13,700 deaths, and over 1.3 million emergency room visits? In addition to the pain and suffering, the medical costs for fall-related injuries now topped \$19 Billion. Here are some tips that have proven effective in preventing falls:

- ❑ Medications: Have your physician or pharmacist review your medications including prescriptions and over-the counter medications so you are as alert as possible.
- ❑ Exercise regularly, it helps with strength and balance
- ❑ Have an annual eye exam, and wear corrective glasses if needed
- ❑ Lighting: Improve lighting indoors and outside. Use nightlights in the bedroom, bathroom and hallways. Use porch or motion lights outdoors.
- ❑ In the bathroom: install grab bars, non-slip tub bottoms, a bath bench and an elevated toilet seat if necessary. Remove bathroom rugs when not bathing.
- ❑ Remove hazards such as throw rugs, cords, and clutter. Clean up spills immediately
- ❑ Change low, soft seating surfaces to higher stable surfaces with arm rests. Avoid swivel rockers.
- ❑ Check sidewalks, porches and driveways for uneven surfaces & cracks.
- ❑ Make sure that telephones are within reach or have Lifeline installed.
- ❑ Wear supportive shoes with non-slip soles. Avoid slippers and shoes with deep treads
- ❑ If you have been prescribed a walker or cane, use it
- ❑ Be sure to have handrails and good lighting on stairways and non-slip tread on the stairs.
- ❑ Limit alcohol intake
- ❑ Avoid sudden position changes to prevent dizziness when getting up.
- ❑ Obtain a reacher to avoid dizziness that occurs with bending
- ❑ Don't carry heavy or multiple items
- ❑ If you have been falling, consult with your physician about the need for a physical therapy evaluation

If you have questions call the Saint Elizabeth Home Care team at 402-219-7043