

Risk Factor – Injurious Falls

Facts

- Each year, one in every three adults age 65 and older falls.
- One out of three adults age 65 and older falls each year but less than half talk to their healthcare providers about it.
- Falls can cause moderate to severe injuries, such as hip fractures and head traumas, and can increase the risk of early death.
- Among older adults (those 65 or older), falls are the leading cause of injury death. They are also the most common cause of nonfatal injuries and hospital admissions for trauma.
- The death rates from falls among older men and women have risen sharply over the past decade.
- Minnesota's fatal fall rate is one of the highest in the nation and has continued to climb from 10.4 per 100,000 in 2005 to 12.1 per 100,000 population in 2010. Most of these fatalities were among older adults.
- Falls can happen anytime, anyplace and to anyone. Having a fall can change one's life forever. Falling is not an inevitable part of aging, falls are preventable.

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Tips

Studies find that your chance of having a fall can be decreased by following simple suggestions.

- Exercise regularly. It is important that the exercises focus on increasing leg strength and improving balance, and that they get more challenging over time.
- Ask your doctor and pharmacist to review your medicines—both prescription and over-the counter—to identify medicines that may cause side effects or interactions such as dizziness or drowsiness.
- Have your eyes checked by an eye doctor at least once a year and update your eyeglasses to maximize your vision. Consider getting a pair with single vision distance lenses for some activities such as walking outside.
- Make your home safer by reducing tripping hazards, adding grab bars inside and outside the tub or shower and next to the toilet, adding stair railings and improving the lighting in their homes.

To lower your hip fracture risk, you can:

- Get adequate calcium and vitamin D—from food and/or from supplements.
- Do weight bearing exercise.
- Get screened and treated for osteoporosis.

Find more simple suggestions at: <http://www.mnfallsprevention.org/>