

Fall Prevention Tips for Home Safety Month

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Each year, home-related fall injuries result in an average of 21 million medical visits and 20,000 deaths. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, falls are the number one cause of injury death. Additionally, the CDC cites falls as a common cause of injuries and hospital admissions for trauma among seniors.

Stiff muscles and joints make seniors more susceptible to injuries in the home as reaction time slows with age. Certain medications can also affect balance and vision in older adults. Fortunately, there are many preventive measures seniors and their loved ones can take to help protect from dangerous falls in the home. Take for instance, the following tips from the CDC and StayWell.org:

Check Your Rugs: While rugs provide an extra layer of decoration to the home, they also increase chances of slipping. Place a nonskid pad

underneath area rugs and remove all throw rugs as they pose a risk of tripping.

Clear Paths: Be sure keep rooms free of clutter and clear walking paths along the stairs and between furniture. Check that all wires are tucked away to eliminate any risk of tripping.

Bathroom Safety: Install grab bars in the tub or shower. Place a nonskid rubber mat in the tub or shower and a bathmat with nonskid backing on the bathroom floor.

Lighting: Place nightlights along the path between bedroom and bathroom and keep a flashlight in each room.

Exercise Regularly: Balance exercises help build strength in leg muscles, which will help improve balance and prevent falls. Tai Chi, a slow-motion Chinese martial art, is one of the leading ways specialists suggest seniors improve their balance.

Medication reviews: Ask your doctor or pharmacist to review your medicines—both prescription and over-the-counter—to reduce side effects and interactions that may cause dizziness or drowsiness.

Annual tests for your eyes and bones: Have your eyes checked by an eye doctor at least once a year.

