



CCM Newsletter

Preventing Falls

March 2019

Dr. Thomas Mueller, Medical Director

Volume 2, Number 3

E-mail
columbusch.com

Clinic Phone
[979/732-2318](tel:9797322318)

REMINDER:
As a member of CCM, the special Chronic Care Management phone number is available for your personal use.

Are you at risk of falling?

The hazards and risks of falling increase as people age. Getting older can be accompanied by problems with balance, making it more difficult to walk steady. The consequences of falling are more serious in older people.

Approximately 1 out of every 3 people over the age of 65 fall every year. Up to 75 percent of people who break a hip bone do not recover to the point they were before the bone broke. If you have fallen in the past, you are at higher risk of falling again. Breaking bones can be deadly, so

prevention is KEY 



What Increases the Risk of Falling?

- Problems that affect:
 - Eyesight
 - Hearing
 - Muscle strength
 - Balance
- Medicines like those used for:
 - Sleeping problems
 - Anxiety
 - Depression
- Adding new medicines and changing doses of some medicines may affect your risk
- A previous fall
- An unsafe setting that might trip you
 - ◆Rugs ◆Electrical Cords◆
 - ◆Improperly placed Furniture◆

What Increases the Risk of Falling continued...

- Unfamiliar settings ... a friend's house, the movies
- Poor lighting
- Climbing ladders

Prevention of Falls



- Make your home safer
 - Fix or get rid of things that might make you trip or slip:
 - Furniture that gets in the way; move it so you have a clear path
 - Electrical cords; coil or tape cords next to the wall. If needed, have an electrician put in another outlet
 - Clutter
 - Loose rugs
 - Keep your home well-lit so that you can easily see where you are going
 - Consider having an electrician install light switches that glow
 - Have friends or family replace any burned out bulbs
 - Put in a nightlight
 - Stairs
 - Fix loose or uneven steps
 - For bare wood stairs, attach non-slip rubber treads to the stairs
 - Fix loose handrails or install handrails if there are none
 - Fix loose or torn carpet
 - Avoid storing things in high places so you don't have to reach or climb
 - If you have to use a stepstool, use one with a bar to hold on to
 - Never use a chair as a stepstool
 - Install a non-slip rubber mat or self-stick strips on floor of the tub or shower
 - Install grab bars next to and inside the tub or shower and next to toilet
- Wear sturdy shoes that fit well
 - Don't wear high heels
 - Don't wear shoes with slippery soles---rubber soles are best
 - Don't wear shoes that are too loose

- Don't walk around in bare feet or in only socks...it has been proven to increase risk for falling!!!
- Take vitamin D pills
 - Taking vitamin D *might* lower the risk of falls in older people because vitamin D helps make bones and muscles stronger
 - Talk to your provider about taking vitamin D, and how much
- Stay active
 - Exercising on a regular basis will help lower your risk of falling
 - It might also help prevent you from getting hurt if you do fall
 - It is best to do a few different activities that help with both strength and balance
 - There are many kinds of exercise that can be safe for older people
 - ◆Walking ◆Swimming ◆Tai Chi (a form of exercise using slow, gentle movements)
- Use a cane, walker, and other safety devices
 - If your provider recommends you use a cane or walker, be sure it's the right size and you know how to use it
 - Other devices that might help you avoid falling
 - Grab bars
 - Sturdy seat for the shower
 - Non-slip bath mats
 - Hand rails or treads for the stairs (to prevent slipping)
- If you worry that you could fall, there are systems and alarms that let you call for help if you fall and can't get up

What to do if a fall occurs

- If you fall, see your provider's right away, even if you aren't hurt
 - He or she can try to figure out what caused the fall
 - An exam will be performed with review of your health problems, medicines, and activities
 - Recommendations and suggestions will be made about things you can do to avoid falling again

Prevention is the **key**



Many older people have a hard time recovering after a fall

Doing things to **prevent** falling can help you protect your health and independence

References: UpToDate, CDC

