

Caregiver Assistance News

“ C A R I N G F O R Y O U . . . C A R I N G F O R O T H E R S ”

Falls Prevention—Safety on Outings

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, even though one-third of adults age 65 and older experience a fall each year, fewer than half of these individuals tell their physician about it. It is essential to notify the doctor about the event. The doctor can make sure that an *invisible* injury did not result from the fall.

Fear of Falling

Balance can be affected in a person with a disability, such as stroke, and consequently many elderly people fear falling. Certain eye and ear disorders may increase risk of falls. If the person in your care has balance

problems, dizziness, or a spinning sensation, a therapy subscription from the doctor may help.

To reduce fear of falling, therapists often have people practice getting up from a lying position. This increases confidence that they can get up if they fall. Any amount of exercise helps reduce risk of falls.

Water Therapy

Water therapy is also a safe way for a person with a disability and the elderly to exercise because there is no danger of falling. Floating in water allows easy movement and little strain on joints and muscles.

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Fall Prevention Measures

- ✓ Staying in when it is rainy or icy outside.
- ✓ Having regular vision screening check-ups for eyeglasses.
- ✓ Using separate reading glasses and other regular glasses if bifocals make it difficult to see the floor.
- ✓ Being cautious when walking on wet floors. Look carefully at floor surfaces in public buildings. Many floors are made of highly polished marble or tile that can be very slippery.
- ✓ Wearing good foot support when walking. New shoes are slippery and crepe-soled shoes can cause the toe to catch.
- ✓ Having foot pain problems corrected and keep toenails trimmed and feet healthy for good balance.
- ✓ Avoid gravel or rock yards or paths.
- ✓ Stop at curbs and check the height before stepping up or down. Be cautious at curbs that have been cut away to allow access for bikes or wheelchairs. The incline may lead to a fall.
- ✓ Consider wearing hip protectors for added protection should you fall.
- ✓ Use a shoulder bag or fanny pack to leave your hands free to use hand rails as you go up and down steps and on escalators.
- ✓ Use a walker or cane as needed for added stability.



Transferring from a Wheelchair to a Car

Be sure the car is parked on a level surface without cracks or potholes.

- Open the passenger door as far as possible.
- 1** • Move the left side of the wheelchair as close to the car seat as possible.
- **Lock the chair's wheels.**
- Move both footrests out of the way.



◀ **2**

- Position yourself facing the person.
- Tell him what you are going to do.
- Bending your knees and hips, lower yourself to his level.
- By grasping the transfer belt around his waist help him stand while straightening your hips and knees.
- If his legs are weak, brace his knees with your knees.



◀ **3**

- While he is standing, turn him so he can be eased down to sit on the car seat. **GUIDE HIS HEAD** so it is not bumped.



◀ **4**

- Lift his legs into the car by putting your hands under his knees.
- Move him to face the front.
- Put on his seat belt.
- Close door carefully.

Transportation

A network of transportation services, public and private, will pick up the disabled and the elderly at their homes. These services rely on vans and paid drivers and run on a schedule to specific locations. Free transportation is available from community volunteer organizations, although most public services charge on a sliding scale.

Taking Care of Yourself—What is influenza?

Influenza (“the flu”) is a contagious respiratory illness that can be severe and life-threatening, especially for adults 65 years of age and older. The immune system weakens with age, which makes it harder to fight disease. The flu can be dangerous in older adults whether they are healthy or have a chronic health condition such as heart disease or diabetes, which can worsen as a result of the flu.

Getting an annual flu vaccination is one of the things you can do to help maintain your health. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the single best way to help prevent the flu is to get an annual vaccination, which is recommended for everyone six months of age and older, with rare exception.

Source: NCOA National Council on Aging

NOTE

If the person falls and cannot move or use the injured limb, keep the limb from moving. Do not straighten a deformed arm or leg. Splint an injury in the position you find it. Seek advice from the healthcare provider.

Live Life Laughing!

Are you diagnosing yourself on the internet again?



Inspiration

An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

~Benjamin Franklin

Caregiving in The Comfort of Home®

Our Purpose

To provide caregivers with critical information enabling them to do their job with confidence, pride, and competence.

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SAFETY TIPS—Outdoor Areas

Safe outdoor areas are important, especially for those who are frail or elderly and are mobile. Safety features should include the following:

- ★ Ramps for access on ground that is not level or even
- ★ A deck with a sturdy railing
- ★ Alarmed or locked outside doors
- ★ Enough light to see walkway hazards at night
- ★ Nonslip step surfaces in good repair
- ★ Stair handrails fastened to their fittings
- ★ Cover porch steps with a gritty, weather-proof paint and step edges marked with reflective paint

NEXT ISSUE... COMING HOME FROM THE HOSPITAL – PREPARE THE HOME