

## National Falls Prevention Awareness Day

September 23, 2015 is National Falls Prevention Awareness Day. This day is observed to promote and increase public awareness about how to prevent and reduce falls among older adults.

Did you know that one in three older Americans falls every year? Falls are the leading cause of both fatal and nonfatal injuries for people aged 65+. Every 15 seconds, an older adult is seen in the emergency room for a fall related injury. Even falls without a major injury can cause an older adult to become fearful or depressed, making it difficult for them to stay active. If you have an aging parent, grandparent, or neighbor in your life, helping them reduce their risk of falling is a great way to help them stay healthy and independent as long as possible.

Since the theme this year is “Preventing Falls—One Step at a Time”, MyPillar Health Care will like to encourage you to prevent falls with the following four small steps:

1. **Increase your physical activity.** Falls often occur because as we age our balance, mobility and agility begin to decline. Engaging in regular physical activity, particularly ones that focus on flexibility and strength in the legs and core can improve stability. Keeping flexible and fit also means that injuries from falls are likely to be lessened. Simple exercise, like walking or swimming at least 15 minutes a day can help build muscle strength and improve balance, which can prevent falls. Exercise programs like Tai Chi that increase strength and improve balance are especially good.
2. **Maintain good eyesight.** See your eye doctor once each year. Poor vision makes it more difficult to move around safely. Age-related eye diseases, such as cataracts, macular degeneration and diabetic retinopathy, can increase the risk of falling. Early detection is key to minimizing the effects of these conditions. Wearing contact lenses or glasses with the right prescription is also very important to preventing falls. Ensure your loved ones homes are well lit and that blown bulbs get replaced promptly. Encourage them to keep a few torches dotted around the house in case the power goes out.

3. **Keep your home safe.** It is not common to hear older adults say they know their home like the back of their hand. However, it is a simple fact that the average house presents a gamut of trip risks. About half of all falls occur at home. From the loose mat in the porch to that wet bathroom floor, the scope for falls in the home is endless. Remove environmental hazards. Simple steps such as moving crockery and food to more accessible cupboards and fixing loose floorboards and carpet will all help prevent a nasty fall. Look around the house for anything that could increase the risk of falls, including slippery floors, clutter and unsteady furniture. Remove or modify these hazards. Improve home safety by adding grab bars inside and outside the tub or shower and next to the toilet, adding railings on both sides of stairways and improving lighting in the home.
4. **Review your medications.** Talk to your doctor or pharmacist about the medicines you are taking and whether they may cause drowsiness or dizziness. Discuss things you can do to ensure you are taking your medicines safely.

Always keep in mind that at MyPillar Health Care, our caregivers can help you or a loved one prevent falls through in-home assessments, home safety advice and collaboration with other professionals in the industry. Contact us today for a free nursing assessment to see how we can help you or your loved one maintain their safety and independence at home by avoiding unnecessary and nasty falls.



