FOX™ GERI
GERIATRIC EDUCATION & RESEARCH INSTITUTE

"The Only Thing Falling this Autumn Should be the Leaves"
FALL PREVETION TIPS

Hearing/Inner Ear

- If appropriate, see an ear/nose/throat (ENT) specialist for proper testing.
- If you do not hear as well as you used to, or if you are always asking those around you to repeat themselves, it is time to have a hearing test.
- If you already have a hearing aid, wear it consistently.

Vision

- Recommend see your eye doctor regularly. Have all your glasses (reading, driving, sunglasses, and regular everyday glasses) checked regularly.
- Wear your eyeglasses consistently, as recommended by your eye doctor.
- Make sure your eye glasses are kept clean.
- Provide proper lighting throughout your home.
- Provide night lights for night-time toileting.
- Communicate with your physician and request referral to Occupational Therapy for specific low vision training.

Proprioception/Other Medical Conditions

- See a doctor regularly to manage any existing conditions and prevent them from getting worse.
- Visit your doctor regularly to manage cardiac conditions including CHF and Orthostatic Hypotension. Have the doctor check your blood pressure lying, sitting and standing.
- Visit your physician regularly to properly monitor and manage your osteoporosis (bone scan, well balanced diet, moderate exercise program, vitamin supplements such as calcium and vitamin D).
- Manage diabetes appropriately.

Medications

- Be knowledgeable about your medications, read and be aware of the potential side effects.
- See your physician regularly: take ALL your medications and vitamin supplements with you to your doctor visit EVERY time. Have the doctor review to see if any can be reduced or stopped. DO NOT reduce or stop a medication on your own – ask your doctor first.

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Environment/Home Safety

- Lighting
  - Ensure that all common areas & individual room are well lit
  - Use night lights for toileting at night, avoid glare
- Remove obstacles
  - Clear clutter to reduce risk of tripping over objects
  - Clear pathways in room/common areas for flow of walking traffic
  - Carpets/rugs: avoid throw rugs (especially with the use of a rolling walker)
- Cabinets/shelves: keep frequently used items at waist level.
- Bathroom:
  - Use approved grab bars for support rather than towel bars
  - Use elevated toilet seat if too low
  - Provide a skid resistant surface (strips or pad) in showers
  - Use shower chair
  - Ensure that floor and feet are dry after showering

Use of assistive devices

- Reacher/grabber to pick things up from the floor
- Devices to make dressing easier: Sock donner, Velcro shoes, slip on shoes, shoes with elastic laces.
- Cane/walker: should be adjusted and fitted for each individual person according to height and size.
- Is the cane/walker working properly?
- Are the tips worn and need to be replaced?
- Are you using it properly?

Proper footwear

- Recommend regular podiatry visits
- Recommend consistent use of properly fitted, supportive, flat-soled, skid-resistant soles.

What can Physical and Occupational Therapy do to prevent falls?

- Home Safety Assessment
- Balance Evaluation and Training
- Gait/Walking evaluation and training
- Instruction in a safe, moderate exercise program including strengthening, flexibility and balance exercises
- Assessment of current equipment and ordering of required new equipment

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