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Interventions That Reduce Fall Risks

Falls are a serious, epidemic problem. Over 13 million older adults fall every year. About half of older adults who fall cannot get back up without help. Moreover, the longer the time on the floor is after a fall, the greater the incidence of serious preventable consequences. This can include need for hospitalization, loss of independent living, and death. Falls are common and can come with tremendous costs. One in three older adults falls each year and falling is the leading cause of both fatal and nonfatal injuries. It is not possible to prevent every fall, but there are proven interventions which can reduce risk and help older adults live better, more independent, longer lives. Here are four intervention strategies that address common fall risks factors.

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The Mortality Rate from Falls Has Been Determined To Be:

67% *when time on the floor is more than 72 hours*

AS OPPOSED TO

12% *when time on the floor is less than one hour*

**Always keep your EasyCall
on you! It can save your life!**

Exercise Programs: Exercise is the most widely studied single fall prevention intervention and is one of the most important actions seniors can take for their health. Recent findings show that exercise can reduce fall risk by 22-46%. Older adults at risk of falling should have exercise routines that are specifically designed to maintain or improve balance, strength, and endurance.

Tai Chi Movements: Tai Chi is a slow and gentle exercise that is suitable for older adults, even if they are managing chronic conditions. It offers the benefits of flexibility, muscle strengthening, and endurance training. Tai Chi can improve the health of seniors without worsening existing impairments. In fact, a study from the Emory University School of Medicine showed that Tai Chi classes help reduce fall risk by almost 50%.

Supplementation of Vitamin D: Vitamin D has beneficial effects on muscle and improves strength and balance. Older adults who are vitamin D deficient often suffer from muscle weakness, and pain, which can increase falls risk and limit mobility. Studies have also shown that vitamin D supplementation can lower the risk of fractures and reduce falls risk by up to 19-26%.

Home Safety Assessment & Modifications: As we get older, items in our home that used to be virtually harmless start to pose a greater risk. Carpets, stairs, floors, and even pets can be dangerous. The good news is that many falls can be prevented. Home safety evaluations and modifications can be self-conducted or performed by professional caregivers. In particular, those that are administered by a nurse, physical therapist, or occupational therapist, have been shown to reduce falls by nearly 20%.

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Sleeping Well as You Age

As we age we often experience normal changes in our sleeping patterns. We may become sleepy earlier, wake up earlier, or enjoy less deep sleep. Although these changes are a normal part of aging, disturbed sleep, waking up tired everyday, and other symptoms of insomnia are not a normal part of aging. Sleep is just as important to our physical and emotional health over the age of 50 as it was when we were younger.

No matter what your age, sleeping well is essential to your physical health and emotional well-being. For older adults, a good night's sleep is especially important because it helps improve concentration and memory formation, allows your body to repair cell damage which occurred during the day, and refreshes your immune system, which in turn helps to prevent disease.

Many physicians consider sleep to be a barometer of a person's health, like taking his or her temperature. Older adults who don't sleep well are more likely to suffer from depression, attention and memory problems, and excessive daytime sleepiness. They are likely to suffer more nighttime falls, have increased sensitivity to pain, and use more prescription or over-the-counter sleep aids. Insufficient sleep can also lead to many serious health problems in older adults, including and increase risk or cardiovascular disease, diabetes, weight problems and breast cancer in women.

While sleep requirements vary from person to person, most healthy adults tend to require between 7 1/2 to 9 hours of sleep per night to function at their best. How you feel following a night's sleep is more important than the specific number of hours you spend asleep.



Easy, Healthy Pumpkin Soup

Ingredients

- ◆ 1 can white beans (15 oz rinsed & drained)
- ◆ 1 small onion
- ◆ 1 cup of water
- ◆ 1 can of pumpkin (15 oz plain)
- ◆ 1 can low-salt chicken or vegetable broth (14.5 oz)
- ◆ 1/2 teaspoon thyme or tarragon
- ◆ Salt and pepper to taste

Preparation

Blend white beans, onion and water. In a soup pot, mix bean puree with pumpkin, broth and spices. Cover and cook over low heat about 15 to 20 minutes until warmed through. *Happy Fall*

Our Family is Growing...



Advanced Security and **EasyCall** are so excited to welcome 4 new members to the family (and more are on the way!) Recently we had a Baby Bonanza with the little darlings stopping by to entertain us. Needless to say, no one got any work done that afternoon while we took turns holding the little bundles of joy. Congratulations Blaine, Jamie, Melanie, Hiede and Cori. We love our new additions.

Safe, Independent Living

Many seniors prefer staying in their own homes for as long as possible. However, as an individual becomes more fragile, living at home becomes difficult, even risky. Health problems and side effects from medications can increase chances of injury in the home. The leading cause of death among adults 65 and older is falling which results in broken hip bones. There are some simple ways to age in the comfort of your home. Here are a few safety tips to have in place this fall season:

- ◆ Make sure there are clear fire-escape routes
- ◆ Smoke alarms on every floor and outside every bedroom are absolutely necessary. Check the batteries regularly.
- ◆ Install a carbon monoxide detector that sounds an alarm.
- ◆ Place a fire extinguisher in the kitchen.
- ◆ Consider using monitors and intercoms.
- ◆ Keep home well lit, especially areas like stairways, porches, and outside walkways.
- ◆ Place protective screens on fireplaces.
- ◆ Exposed hot-water pipes need to be covered.
- ◆ Add extra light switches or remote switches such as those that go on or off with the clap of hands.
- ◆ Work out an emergency escape plan in case of fire, earthquake, or any other emergency.

We at **EasyCall** want you living safely and independent in the security of your own home.



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Personal Emergency Response