

Fall Prevention For Your Loved Ones

With aging, falling becomes a more serious and realistic issue. Though there are easy to recognize warning signs, some indicators may be difficult to spot. The weakening of muscles, changes in medication, eyesight impairment, hearing loss, and excessive tiredness are all contributors that are the cause of falling, resulting in potentially severe injuries.

Fall prevention can be implemented in a variety of ways that can make your lives easier. Learn to recognize the signs and how to make swift and necessary modifications to ensure fall prevention with these steps:

1. Introduce walking aids such as canes or walkers.

It may be a challenge to accept that a walking aid is needed and often times it takes time to get comfortable using them. Encourage your loved one to practice and stay nearby for added security in the event that they become unsteady or frustrated. You may be met with resistance, as accepting that assistance is needed can be perceived as insulting or demeaning. It is important to talk with them about their care and wellbeing, and that you are only ensuring their safety, independence, and maintaining good health.

2. Keep watch for any visual or mental changes to proactively monitor falls.

Changes in eyesight can result in blurry vision, headaches, and unsteady gait. Watch if your loved one starts to squint or complains of headaches, as these are the most obvious signs of needing to see an ophthalmologist. Proper eye care will aid in fall prevention, as clear vision is essential in comfort and safety.

Dementia and Alzheimer's disease are not uncommon among aging adults. Confusion, memory loss, feeling disoriented, and irritability are contributors that may lead to other ailments. Keeping your loved ones in a relaxed and content state of mind reduces the chances of restless movements and agitation.

3. Take precautions by rearranging furniture, moving sharp objects out of reach, and installing stair lifts.

Tablecloths, kitchen objects, pet toys, blankets, and coffee tables can be potential hazards while walking, leaning over to grasp for support, or tripping on items scattered on the floor. Tables clothes are liable to slip if they do not have enough grip, blankets can easily slide if grabbed on the back of a chair, and objects in the path of walking run the risk of causing your loved one to trip or get caught around their feet.

Stairs can be tiresome and grueling on aching, fatigued muscles. Before stair climbing becomes a detrimental issue, consider installing a stair lift in the home. Some insurance carriers cover the stair lift along with the installation with little to no cost with a signed doctor's note. Considering the use of a stair

lift before an accident will be of great assistance in fall prevention, reducing the chances of future health-related issues, hospital stays, or broken bones.

4. Schedule regular check-ups with a primary care physician.

Consulting with a trusted primary care physician is an easy way to track the stability of your loved one's health. They can notice progress in medication, weight consistency, and may be able to spot new symptoms easier than a daily caregiver. Developing a trust between your loved one and their physician is vital in compliance during difficult times and when changes need to occur.

5. When prescribed a new medication, discuss the potential side effects and possible interactions with existing medications with a pharmacist.

Pharmacists have a wealth of knowledge about prescriptions and how they affect the body and mentality. Some medications can cause personality changes, fluctuation in blood pressure, nausea, and depression. Working with a pharmacist and primary care physician as a team can prepare you for potential issues and what to expect. High and low blood pressure increases dizziness upon standing, leading to the likelihood of falling.

It is crucial to create an open line of communication with all medical professionals, individuals that will be in the presence of your loved one, and the person that is being cared for. Sharing details of care expectations, changes that have been put into place, along with reassurance of taking these steps to ensure their independence will be beneficial in reducing resistance to changes and more consistent monitoring of your loved one. Consult a trusted medical professional before making any changes, as there may be other methods suggested for what is the best course of action.