

## WHAT YOU CAN DO TO PREVENT FALLS

### HEALTH AND SAFETY ISSUES:

- ♥ Do a brown bag test: Talk to your Doctor and Pharmacist about the medications you take. Put all medications including any supplements and over the counter medications you commonly take into a brown bag and take them to a doctor or pharmacist for review.
  - Multiple medications can cause dizziness, drowsiness and balance problems. It is important to have all of your medications reviewed at least once a year by a pharmacist or doctor.
- ♥ Tell your Doctor if you are experiencing vision or hearing loss:
  - ❑ Have you or those around you noticed a change in your hearing? Dizziness can occur with hearing loss. Set up an appointment to have your hearing checked.
  - ❑ Have you or those around you noticed a change in your vision? Seeing obstacles is the first step in avoiding a fall. Keep your glasses clean. Have your eyes examined once a year.
- ♥ If you have fallen in the past year (especially if you have fallen two or more times in the last six months) tell your Healthcare Provider and describe how you fell.
- ♥ Do you wear floppy slippers or a long bathrobe?
  - Wear well-fitting slippers with non-skid soles. Avoid night clothing that drags on the floor and keep your robe tied.

### ABILITIES:

- ♥ Tell your Healthcare Provider if you feel weak in your legs or have any other problems with your legs or feet.
- ♥ Do you have trouble:
  - ❑ Reaching overhead?



Put commonly used things on shelves that are easy to reach. If you must reach overhead, keep a sturdy stool handy.

- Picking up objects from the floor?  
Plan ahead. Move the object closer to something sturdy to hold on to.
- Getting in and out of the bathtub?  
Consider adding grab bars to the walls or using a tub seat to assist with bathing. Non-skid tub mats and a hand held shower can also be useful.
- Getting in and out of a chair?  
Avoid sitting on low furniture. Chairs with arms make it easier to get up.
- Walking without holding on to something?  
If you feel unsteady without holding on to something, you may need an assistive device such as a cane or walker.

#### **IN YOUR HOME:**

- ♥ Perform a Home Assessment for safety to include lighting, flooring, and furniture placement.
- ♥ Do you have:
  - Throw rugs?  
Throw rugs pose a tripping hazard. They should be tacked down or removed.
  - Stairs without rails?  
Using hand rails to go up and down stairs is easier and safer. Add hand rails to all stairs if possible.
  - Clutter in your walking space?  
Clutter such as shoes, electrical cords and magazines are a safety hazard. Keep pathways clear.
  - Dark hallways or stairwells?  
Good lighting can reduce the chance of falling. Consider adding night-lights where overhead lighting is lacking. Add bright tape strips to the edge of each Stair. Always keep a charged flashlight near your bed for emergencies. A night Light in the bathroom can also make night trips to the bathroom safer.