

## **Fall Prevention**

As we age, our bones become more brittle. A fall that might only bruise a healthy woman in her thirties, can result in a painful, broken hip for a woman over 65. Fall prevention is an important consideration for the elderly, and even more so if you have been diagnosed with osteoporosis. There is a lot you can do to help prevent slips and falls.

**Removing hazards around your house that could increase your chances of stumbling or slipping.** Extension cords across walkways and throw rugs are potential trip hazards, as is anything lying on the floor. Door steps or door jams could be removed when possible, or made safer and more visible if not. Throw rugs on hard floors are also potential slip hazards. Hard floors, tile and linoleum are slippery when wet. This makes the kitchen and bathroom some of the most dangerous rooms in the house. Keep the floor dry and don't track dirt or water in from outside.

**Leave some lights on at night so you can see better when walking around your house.**

**Take extra precautions in the bathroom.** Install safety grab bars. Use anti-slip mats in the shower, bathtub and bathroom floor. If you have a cell phone, keep it near you while in the bathroom.

**Wear shoes that fit well and that have heels.** This includes slippers. Slippers that do not have heels can cause you to trip and fall.

**Avoid sedating medicines.** These medicines can make you drowsy and unsteady. If you must take them, be extra careful when you are up and about. For example, hold on to countertops or sturdy furniture to avoid falling.

**Make sure your vision is good.** Have your eyes checked once or twice a year by an eye doctor.

**Do not walk outdoors alone on icy or raining days.** Use a cane. Walk only in well lit areas on smooth surfaces. Carry your cell phone just in case.

**Severely reduce alcohol use!** Not only does alcohol diminish your balance and judgment, but it can weaken bones, thus making the fall more likely while increasing its consequences.

**Exercise.** Don't think that the best way to prevent a fall is just not to move! Safe exercise improves your strength, balance, stability and confidence. While inactivity furthers the weakening of your muscles and bones. At a minimum, routine, brisk walking is a simple way to keep your body in shape enough to safely enjoy your life without undue fear of falls.