

Orange County

In-Home Supportive Services



Public Authority



Partnership for Successful Providers



FALL PREVENTION

Working hand in hand with the community to serve IHSS Consumers so they may remain safe and independent in their own home.

Overview



Falls

- Statistics
- DVD
- Myth
- Risk Factors
- When Someone is No Longer Safe Being Alone
- Physical and Emotional Effects of Falls
- Fall Prevention for Caregivers
- Community Resources

Statistics



“Each year, thousands of older Americans fall at home. Many of them are seriously injured, and some are disabled. In 2004, falls were responsible for 14,900 deaths. In 2011, 2.4 million nonfatal fall injuries among older adults were treated in emergency departments and more than 689,000 of these patients were hospitalized”.

Source: Center for Disease Control and Prevention

DVD



Fall Prevention

MYTH



It is common to think that falling is part of getting older. The truth is

FALLS ARE *NOT* PART OF THE NORMAL AGING PROCESS.

Falls occur to individuals of all ages and most falls can be prevented.

Risk Factors



- ❑ Fear of falling
- ❑ Conditions: Medical, Vision, Hearing
- ❑ Side Affects of Medications
- ❑ Hazards: Inside and outdoor
- ❑ Equipment/Devices
- ❑ Poor physical strength

Fear of Falling



Fear of falling has a great impact on older adults

- ❑ Can *increase* the risk of falling
- ❑ Restricts the activities older adults participate in
- ❑ Causes older adults to stop activities they previously enjoyed, even if they have never fallen

Conditions that increase the risk of falls

Medical

- ❑ Conditions that cause stiff joints, weakness, dizziness, or difficulty walking increase the risk of falling. Some common conditions include but are not limited to the following list:
 - Arthritis – stiff joints
 - Cardiovascular disease
 - Dementia
 - Stroke
 - Parkinson's Disease – difficulty walking
 - Osteoporosis
 - High or Low Blood Pressure
 - Lung Disease
 - Seizures
 - Sundowner Syndrome - individuals who become confused after sundown when it becomes dark

Vision/Hearing

- ❑ Impaired vision and hearing can also affect balance
 - Poor lighting

Medication Side Affects

MEDICATIONS

- Understand the side affects of the medication(s) being taken:
 - Prescribed or over the counter
 - Does it cause drowsiness, weakness, dizziness, nausea, etc.



Hazards

Rugs/runners:

Rugs/runners should be removed.

- *If they cannot be removed, use anti-skid/rubberized material underneath or double-sided adhesive to keep them from moving*
- Check for wrinkles, loose areas and worn or torn spots

Electric cords:

Cords should be placed along the wall - not under rugs or runners

Clutter:

Remove clutter

Telephones:

Phones should be placed throughout the house in order to prevent the need to rush to answer the call – cordless phone is an option

Setting:

Consumer needs a familiar setting - only move furniture that poses a threat

Furniture:

Inspect furniture for stability, back support, armrest availability

Footwear:

Flat, close-toe shoes are recommended



Eliminating Hazards (continued)

KITCHEN

- Place non-skid mat in front of the sink
- Place regularly used items in an easy to reach location – avoid need for stools, etc.
- Place items between hip and eye level

BEDROOM

- Bed should be stable – placing it against the wall can help stabilize it
- Telephone and lamp should be within reach
- Clothes/robes should not be too long or loose
- Encourage the individual to get up slowly to avoid dizziness - especially important for individuals with high/low blood pressure

BATHROOM

- Texture strips or mats in the bath/shower for traction
- Sinks, toilets and towel bars should be securely fastened
- Grab bars
- Shower chair/bench , hand-held shower head, raised toilet seat



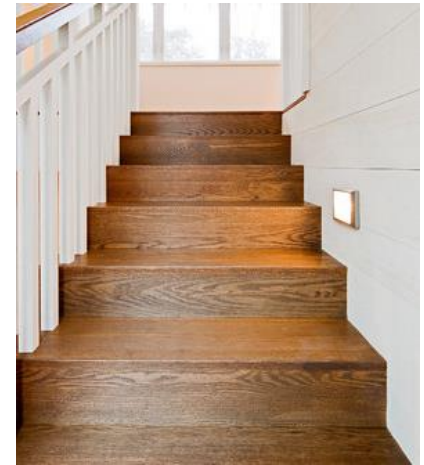
Eliminating Hazards (continued)

LIGHTING

- All areas of the home must have adequate lighting
 - Older adult needs 3x more lighting
 - Cataracts and glaucoma 2 common conditions that limit vision

STAIRS and STEPS

- Most common place for falls that result in serious injury - first and last step where most falls occur
- Do not use loose rugs or runners at the top or bottom of stair landings
- Check the carpet on the steps for loose or torn areas
- Are some steps broken or uneven
- Handrails should be installed on both sides, at the correct height, at all stairways (indoor/outdoor)
- Steps should be marked so they can be easily seen (same color can be difficult to see)
- Do you have only one light switch for your stairs (top or bottom – NOT both)
- Any and all objects should be removed from stairs



Eliminating Hazards (continued)



OUTSIDE THE HOME

- Avoid cement walkways that are uneven/ cracked
- Threshold must be even
- Mark curb step edges with reflective strips/traction tape
- Remove water hoses from walking path
- Avoid oil drips/spills



Eliminating Hazards (continued)



FOOTWEAR

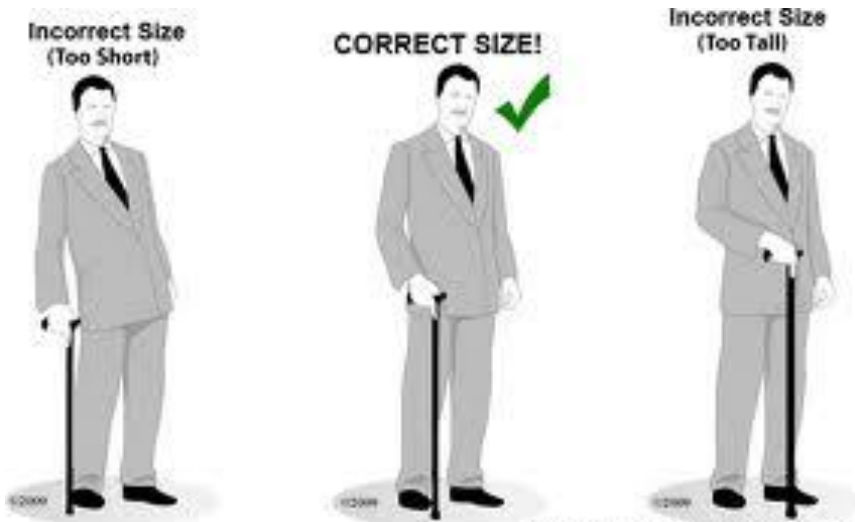
- Do not wear Flip Flops, loose fitting or high heel shoes
- The insole should be slip/sweat resistant
 - Important for individuals who do not wear socks
- If you must wear socks, they should be slip resistant
- The outer sole should be slip resistant



Equipment/Devices: Canes

CANES

- Check for proper fit/height
- Rubber tips must be in good conditions



Images protected by © 2009 - Walking Equipment Co.



Equipment: Walker



For stability: a walker without wheels is a good choice.

For walking: a two-wheel walker allows weight to be placed on the walker

- If leaning on the walker is needed for balance, a four-wheel walker helps the Consumer walk faster

Selecting a grip: difficulty grasping due to arthritis or other joint pains, can be resolved by using a larger grip - may also relieve stress on joints.

Fitting your walker: Elbows should bend at a comfortable angle. The top of your walker should line up with the crease on the inside of your wrist.

Taking the first step: If the Consumer needs to place weight on the walker to move, the Consumer can start by pushing the walker forward and keeping his/her back upright.

No leaning over the walker: Maintain upright position. Steps must be taken into the walker, rather than walking behind it. The walker must not be pushed too far in front of the Consumer

Walker accessories: trays, a pouch/basket and/or seats can be added

Equipment: Wheelchairs



- Lock must be in place when lifting and transferring the Consumer off/onto the chair
 - Turn power to Off if using a power chair

- Footplates must be in up position/removed before moving Consumer on/off the chair
- Avoid Tipping
 - Do not put heavy loads on the back
 - Do not remove anti-tip wheels or bars
- Keep loose objects or lap cover away from the wheel spokes



Equipment: Devices/Services

ALARMS AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE SYSTEMS

- Useful for confused/forgetful and individuals at high risk for falling
- Systems help alleviate the fear of falling
- Not appropriate for individuals with Dementia/Alzheimer's because they may be confused on how to use the system
 - Social Services / Senior programs may provide referrals to resources of these systems



How it works:



Push button for help.



Speak to a LifeSafety Operator.



Help is on the way!

REPORTING A FALL

- Record the date
- Time
- location
- Condition of the CONSUMER when found
- History of prior falls

Equipment: Miscellaneous

The need of every Consumer is unique and must be considered when determining what equipment/devices, if any, are needed to safely assist the Consumer.

The items listed below are examples of items commonly used.

Gait Belts



Walking Cane



Bath Bench



Toilet Frame



Wheelchair



Walker



Transfer Board



Equipment: Gait / Transfer Belts

By utilizing **gait belts**, Providers can securely hold on to the Consumer when lifting or transferring.

- Gait belts also minimize stress on the Provider's back



When someone is no longer safe at home

- The Consumer and his/her family should communicate their thoughts and concerns with one another
 - Consumers are less resistant once they realize how their condition impacts others
- It is important to not overly restrict the Consumer because inactivity can result in emotional and physical distress that increase the risk of falls
- Call doctor for home health referral
- Increase participation in enjoyable activities that promote independence



How Can a Provider Express Safety Concerns

Providers are most often the first to recognize safety hazards. It is important for you to know that it is ok for you to express your concerns. You may want to consider the following approaches:



If you already work for the Consumer:

- “Mrs. Smith, that is a lovely area rug but I am concerned that it can cause you to trip and I know YOU don’t want to get hurt. How do YOU feel about moving it?”
- “Mrs. Smith, I can see that you like collecting items. I am concerned that this area (point to the area) may be in your way and can cause you to fall. How do you feel about moving it there (point to an area you have identified as appropriate and out of the path)?”

If you’re interviewing and you can see safety hazards:

- “Mrs. Smith, you have a lovely home and I would like to be your Provider, but I can see a few areas that I see may be in your path and can cause you to fall. How do you feel about me making suggestions and possibly moving items?”

It is important for the Consumer be in control. If the Consumer is resistant and you are concerned for their safety, it is ok for you to contact his/her Social Worker.

Physical and Emotional Effects of a Fall



In addition to injuries sustained in a fall, the individual experiences changes in lifestyle that impact their emotional well-being.

They can experience:

- Depression
- Helplessness
- Low Self-esteem
- Social isolation
- Limited activity: reduced muscle strength, stiff joints, constipation
- Loss
 - of confidence
 - of independence
 - of the life they knew

Fall Prevention for Caregivers

The Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that caregivers are at great risk of experiencing falls

Caregivers should:

- ❑ Use proper body mechanics when helping someone move
- ❑ Never rush to do your tasks
- ❑ Never rush the person you're caring for
 - The elderly are at greater risk of falling if rushed, stressed, physically ill, upset
- ❑ Never carry objects that are too heavy or large – can cause loss of balance
- ❑ Never block your vision – ex: while moving large packages
- ❑ Wear low heel shoes that have a non-skid sole
 - High tops help support the ankle
 - If only socks are worn, they should be slip resistant – bare socks should be avoided

Resources



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

www.cdc.gov/injury

Down with Falls Coalition – Orange County

1/800-510-2020

<http://www.downwithfalls.org/>

Fall Prevention Center of Excellence

<http://stopfalls.org/>

Falls and Older Adults – National Institute on Aging

<http://nihseniorhealth.gov/falls/aboutfalls/01.html>

Office on Aging

<http://officeonaging.ocgov.com/healthy/fall>



Thank you for attending

Any Questions ?