



Important Information from the...

Northern Virginia Fall Prevention Coalition

Did you know that falls after the age of 70 in the United States were 2 million in 2008! Reports from the Agency for Healthcare Research & Quality documented that 1 in 10 men and 1 out of every 7 women visited an emergency department for fall injuries. All too often the results of these falls amplify mobility problems and many were fated to the use of walkers the remaining of their vital years.

Our mission, the Northern VA Fall Prevention Coalition (NVFPC), is to work with the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention and Virginia organizations, and individuals, concerned with fall prevention and education. Our primary focus is to improve on the existing resources of public practitioners in the state, addressing the need for additional services. We conduct a series of informative seminars fulfilled by professional pharmacists, optometrists, caregivers, and other specialists serving the local community. By educating our state's aging populace brings not only positive social change; but, also a shift in daily routines for the quality of life.

Use these guidelines to reduce risks and ensure your independence.

- To increase your muscle strength and overall body conditioning, review exercise programs. Consider activities such as walking, swimming, or yoga, anything using gentle movement. Activities reduce your risk of falls by improving your strength, balance, coordination and flexibility.
- With your doctor review your health profile and medications to identify conditions where you may be vulnerable to falling. Include all prescription and over-the-counter medications, plus the dosages; and, any herbal supplements you are using. You will be looking for side effects and interactions that may increase your risk of falling. Additionally talk about any sessions of vertigo or shortness of breath that impacts your walking ability.
- Review your footwear choices. Avoid floppy slippers and shoes with smooth soles that can weaken a firm footstep. Notice where your medications have changed your shoe size. Specific medications can cause swelling that enlarges your shoe size.
- Remove paper and book stacks from the living room, bedroom, hallways and stairways where the potential exists that may cause you to fall. Pay special attention to the stringing of electrical cords or phone cords across walkways. Secure loose rugs with double-faced tape, tacks or a slip-resistant backing and use nonslip mats in the bathtub or shower. Review those areas in the shower or bathtub where grab bars would be useful.
- As we age, a reduced amount of light reaches the back of your eye where color and motion are sensed. Maintain the illumination of your home with 100-watt bulbs or higher to avoid tripping. Install a lamp near your bed so you can use it when you get up at night. And, install night lights in your bedroom, bathroom, and hallways.

Using these principles can be your keystones to aging. Don't let the fear of falling eclipse the best years of your life!

Falls are not an inevitable part of aging. Falls are preventable!

We look forward to you joining us at our next seminar. For upcoming events, please visit our Web page, nvfpc.org. Or call Becky Schaffer at 703-475-3044, or Bradley Ann Morgan at 703-999-1691.