

SAFETY SENSE

Facts On Fall Prevention

(NAPSA)—Here's uplifting news: You can take steps to protect yourself and your family from falls.

That's more important than many realize. Falls, it seems, are the leading cause of injury-related visits to the emergency room in the U.S. and the primary cause of accidental deaths in people over age 65, according to American Family Physicians.

The American College of Physicians says that 35 to 40 percent of adults 65 and older who are generally in good health fall at least once a year.

Fall Prevention

Research suggests that one-third to one-half of all accidents and falls in the home can be prevented. The solution may be as simple as installing grab bars in a shower or widening doorways.

In addition, a comprehensive falls prevention program should include a medical evaluation that features an assessment of blood pressure, vision, hearing, balance, muscle loss and mental status. AARP Health Care Options and MetLife Mature Market Institute provide us with the following information on falls prevention:

Fall Prevention Do's And Don'ts

- Do wear supportive, low-heeled, rubber-soled shoes.
- Don't let lights get so bright as to increase glare, but be sure they're bright enough so you can see your way around hallways, stairways and bathrooms. Put night-lights in halls and bathrooms.
- Do have light switches at the top and bottom of each staircase.
- Don't let electrical cords or telephone wires clutter the areas where you walk.
- Do check to see if thresholds present a tripping risk.



Stepping up to the challenge of avoiding falls may be simpler than you know.

- Don't get furniture that's so low or so high it's hard to get on and off.
 - Don't use throw rugs or loose carpets.
 - Do install handrails on both sides of stairways, if possible.
 - Do place nonskid strips in the tub or shower.
 - Do install grab bars in the tub or shower and next to the commode.
- You can learn more from "Since You Care—Falls and Fall Prevention." The free booklet is one of a series of guides that provide practical suggestions, useful tools and information on a variety of specific care-related products topics. It's available from AARP Health Care Options and the MetLife Mature Market Institute. For your free copy, call 203-221-6580 or e-mail MatureMarketInstitute@metlife.com.