

# SAFETY SENSE

## Preventing Injuries And Deaths From Falls

(NAPSA)—For older adults, a fall can often spell disaster. One third of Americans ages 65 and older fall each year. Millions are injured, many of them seriously, as a result. The injuries sustained can rob older adults of their mobility and independence and lead to premature death. In 2004, nearly 15,000 people 65 and older died from falls.

But falls are not an inevitable part of aging. Older adults—and those who care for them—can take steps to lower their risk of falls and fall-related injuries and protect their independence.

These steps are outlined in two consumer-friendly brochures and four posters from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). These full-color, easy-to-read products, developed in partnership with the CDC Foundation and MetLife Foundation, are available in English, Spanish and Chinese.

Examples of fall-prevention tips for older adults include:

- Exercising regularly. Exercise programs like Tai Chi that increase strength and improve balance are especially good.
- Asking their doctor or pharmacist to review their medicines—both prescription and over-the-counter—to reduce side effects and interactions.
- Having their eyes checked by an eye doctor at least once a year.
- Making their homes safer by eliminating fall hazards and improving lighting.



### Older adults can take steps to prevent falls.

CDC reports that the death rate from falls among older adults has increased significantly over the past decade. With the growing population of seniors in the United States, this trend can be expected to continue unless efforts are made to prevent falls.

The strategies outlined in the brochures and posters are fairly simple, but they can greatly reduce the risk of falling. And fall-prevention strategies such as exercising regularly and having medicines reviewed have benefits for overall health, as well.

CDC's fall-prevention brochures and posters are available to organizations and individuals free of charge at [www.cdc.gov/ncipc/duip/fallsmaterial.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/duip/fallsmaterial.htm). Or call (800) CDC-INFO to order by phone.

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