**Facts about Falling\***

 One out of five falls causes a serious injury such as broken bones or a head injury.

 Each year, 3 million older people are treated in emergency departments for fall injuries.

 Over 800,000 patients a year are hospitalized because of a fall injury, most often because of a head injury or hip fracture.

 Each year at least 300,000 older people are hospitalized for hip fractures.

 More than 95% of hip fractures are caused by falling.

**What Conditions Make You More Likely to Fall? \***

Research has identified many conditions that contribute to falling. These are called risk factors. Many risk factors can be changed or modified to help prevent falls. They include:

 Lower body weakness

 Difficulties with walking and balance

 Use of medicines, such as tranquilizers, sedatives, or antidepressants. Even some over-the- counter medicines can affect balance and how steady you are on your feet.

 Vision problems

 Foot pain or poor footwear

 Home hazards or dangers such as:

o broken or uneven steps

o throw rugs or clutter that can be tripped over

Most falls are caused by a combination of risk factors. The more risk factors a person has, the greater their chances of falling.

**What You Can Do to Prevent Falls\***

Falls can be prevented. These are some simple things you can do to keep yourself from falling:

**Talk to Your Doctor**

 Ask your doctor or healthcare provider to **evaluate your risk** for falling and talk with them about specific things you can do.

 Ask your doctor or pharmacist to **review your medicines** to see if any might make you dizzy or sleepy. This should include prescription medicines and over-the counter medicines.

**Do Strength and Balance Exercises**

Do exercises that make your legs stronger and improve your balance.

**Have Your Eyes Checked**

Have your eyes checked by an eye doctor at least once a year and be sure to update your eyeglasses if needed.

If you have bifocal or progressive lenses, you may want to get a pair of glasses with only your distance prescription for outdoor activities, such as walking. Sometimes these types of lenses can make things seem closer or farther away than they really are.

**Make Your Home Safer**

 Get rid of things you could trip over.

 Add grab bars inside and outside your tub or shower and next to the toilet.

 Put railings on both sides of stairs.

 Make sure your home has lots of light by adding more or brighter light bulbs.

**What to Do If You Fall**

 Don’t get up right away. Stay put until you know you are okay.

 Before you get up, shout for someone to help you.

 If you are hurt, call your doctor or 911.

 Call National Home Health or your National Home Health team member to let them know about the accident (even if you are not injured).

 Pay attention to the circumstances surrounding your fall:

o Did you have any symptoms before your fall?

o What time of day did you fall?

o Were you using any equipment, such as a cane or walker?

o Have you had any recent medicine changes?

o What medications did you take in the last 2-3 hours before you fell?

o Were the lights on?

o Were you wearing glasses?

o What shoes were you wearing?

o Was anyone available to help you?

**Please consider a medical alert system if you live alone or are alone often.**

Many people who are injured at home are unable to get to a phone. Medical alert systems supply a button that is worn on the body. When the button is pressed your family or the fire department is notified so you can get the help you need.

\*Center for Disease Control and Prevention. (2019) Important Facts About Falls. https:/[/www.cdc.gov/homeandrecreationalsafety/falls/adultfalls.html](http://www.cdc.gov/homeandrecreationalsafety/falls/adultfalls.html)