



Prairie Faith Parish Nurse News~~July 2021

Body

Mind

Spirit

Each year, millions of older people—those 65 and older—fall. In fact, more than one out of four older people falls each year, but less than half tell their doctor. Falling once doubles your chances of falling again.



Falls can be serious:

- One out of five falls causes a **serious injury** such as a broken bone or a head injury. In fact, falls are the most common cause of **traumatic brain injuries (TBI)**. An older person who falls and hits their head should see their doctor right away to make sure they don't have a brain injury, especially if they are taking a **blood thinner medication**.
- 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**, usually by falling sideways.
- Each year about \$50 billion is spent on medical costs related to non-fatal fall injuries and \$754 million is spent related to fatal falls.
- Many people who fall, even if they're not injured, become afraid of falling. This fear may cause a person to cut down on their everyday activities. When a person is less active, they become weaker and this increases their chances of falling.

If you take care of your overall health, and make some changes within your home environment, you will lower your chances of falling. Most of the time, falls and accidents don't "just happen". Here are a few tips to help you avoid falls, broken bones or other injury:

- **Take your time.** Don't rush getting from point A to point B, be careful when using stairs, and stand for a moment after lying down or sitting, before you start walking, to allow your blood pressure to adjust.
- **Stay physically active.** Plan an exercise program that is right for you. **Regular exercise** improves muscles and makes you stronger. It also helps keep your joints, tendons, and ligaments flexible. Mild weight-bearing activities, such as **walking or climbing stairs**, may slow bone loss from osteoporosis. **Yoga helps flexibility and balance.**
- **Have your eyes and hearing tested.** Even small changes in sight and hearing may cause you to fall. When you get new eyeglasses or contact lenses, take time to get used to them. Always wear your glasses or contacts when you need them. If you have a hearing aid, be sure it fits well and wear it.
- Find out about the **side effects of any medication** you take. If a drug makes you sleepy or dizzy, tell your doctor or pharmacist.
- **Get enough sleep.** If you are sleepy, you are more likely to fall.
- **Limit the amount of alcohol you drink.** Even a small amount of alcohol can affect your balance and reflexes. Studies show that the rate of hip fractures in older adults increases with alcohol use.
- **Make your home safer** by getting rid of things you could trip over like **throw rugs or clutter**. Be aware of where your **pet** is before you move in case they are close to your feet. Add **grab bars** inside and outside your tub or shower and next to the toilet, install **railings** on both sides of stairs, and make sure your home has **adequate lighting** in all areas.
- **Use an assistive device** if you need help feeling steady when you walk. Appropriate use of **canes and walkers** can prevent falls. A physical or occupational therapist can help you decide which devices might be helpful, select the correct size for you, and teach you how to use them safely. **Make it a habit to use your cane or walker—it does no good standing in the corner!**
- Be very **careful when walking on wet or icy surfaces** which are slippery. Try to have sand or salt spread on icy areas by your front or back door.
- Wear **non-skid, rubber-soled, low-heeled shoes**, or lace-up shoes with non-skid soles that fully support your feet. It is important that the soles are not too thin or too thick. Don't walk on stairs or floors in socks or in shoes and slippers with smooth soles.

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- **Avoid wearing clothing that is too loose-fitting or so long** that it drags on the floor creating a tripping hazard.
- **Always tell your doctor if you have fallen since your last checkup, even if you aren't hurt when you fall.** A fall can alert your doctor to a new medical problem or problems with your medications or eyesight that can be corrected. Your doctor may suggest physical therapy, a walking aid, or other steps to help prevent future falls.

(Sources of information include National Institute on Aging and CDC)

Prayer Shawl Ministry
 YOU GAVE ME COMFORT



New prayer shawls were recently blessed by pastors during worship. A prayer shawl is a tangible gift representing the many and continuing prayers for comfort, caring, healing and love offered for an individual experiencing a difficult time for various reasons, serious illness, grief, loss, emotional trials or spiritual upheaval in their lives. If you know of someone in the community who might be comforted by receiving a prayer shawl or blanket, please contact Nancy. There are several options for delivery of a prayer shawl to your friend, neighbor, or family member—you may gift one yourself, give one to someone

else to deliver for you, or you can request that Nancy deliver one. If you enjoy sewing, knitting or crocheting and would like more information about making a prayer shawl, there are patterns at Bethlehem, patterns and ideas can be found online, feel free to design your own pattern, or Nancy can answer any questions you may have. Many thanks to all of those who have shared their time and talent making prayer shawls and blankets to comfort others! ♥

In the darker moments,
 when clouds gather
 and the heaviness we feel
 seems overwhelming,
 remind us of your love,
 carrying the weight
 of so much in that cross,
 embracing the world
 with arms outstretched
 that we might know
 freedom from the chains
 which now constrain us.
 Bring us to your light,
 release our burdens,
 and from despair bring hope. Amen.



(Prayer by John Birch faithandworship.com)

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:6-7)



Feel free to call or email to: schedule a confidential appointment to discuss your health/wellness questions, schedule transportation to a medical/dental/counseling appointment if you need a ride, request a prayer shawl for someone in the community going through a difficult time locate community health resources, request other parish nurse work, or discuss your ideas for the health ministry! 😊

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785-769-4731 (leave a message, please)