

## National Safety Month

*From the desk of Volunteer, Michelle Kelly RDN, LD*

### Preventing Falls

According to the CDC every year, one in every three adults age 65 or older falls and 2 million are treated in the emergency room due to fall-related injuries. They also report that with each decade of life the risk of falling increased.

#### Prevention Tips

- **Exercise** ~ talk to your health care provider about programs available to help you improve balance and mobility.
- **Medications** ~ make sure to talk to your doctor or pharmacist about any side effects or drug interactions of all your medications. Some medications may cause dizziness or drowsiness that could lead to a fall if you lose your balance.
- **Have your vision checked** ~ poor vision can make it hard to get around safely. Be sure to have your eyes checked yearly and wear your glasses or prescription lenses to ensure you are seeing clearly.
- **Eliminate hazards at home** ~ Most falls happen in the home. Keep main walkways and hallways clear of clutter. Use slip resistant rugs and make sure to turn lights on in dark places.

#### Steps for Home Safety

What can you do to protect yourself or a loved one?

- Remove items that you can trip over (papers, books, clothes, and shoes) from stairs and main walkways or hallways
- Install handrails and lights on all staircases
- Remove small throw rugs or use double-sided tape to keep the rugs from slipping
- Keep items you use often in cabinets you can reach easily without the need for a step stool
- Put grab bars inside and outside the tub or shower and next to the toilet
- Use non-slip mats in the bathtub and on the shower floor
- Improve the lighting in your home
- Wear shoes both inside and outside the house. Avoid going barefoot or wearing slippers

#### Benefits to Balance Exercises

- Improved standing and sitting balance
- Lower body strength can improve: balance, mobility, and gait
- Improved range of motion increases ability to do activities of daily living
- Improved reaction time
- Decreased fear of falling
- Increased participation in activities

Talk to your health care provider before starting any exercise program.

Resources: Center for Disease Control and Prevention @ <http://www.cdc.gov/Features/OlderAmericans/>

Functional Fitness for Older Adults by Patricia A Brill

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Thank you!

**Questions?** If you have any questions on this or any nutrition-related topic, or have an idea for a future *Healthy Bite* topic, please call our registered dietitian, Lori Harvey. You can reach her by telephone at 330-376-7717 extension 140 or by email [lharvey@mobilemealsinc.org](mailto:lharvey@mobilemealsinc.org).

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