

The risk of falling increases after an elderly individual comes home from the hospital.

# In Service- Falls Prevention



## Objectives/What You Will Learn:

- Roles of the In-home aide in falls prevention
- Safety tips in the client's Home
- Home Care Client's at risk of falls
- Falls statistics

## Things for the Aide to notice in the client's environment:

### Is the lighting?

- ⇐ Bright enough?
- ⇐ Too Bright?
- ⇐ Adequate for stairs & steps?
- ⇐ Switches easy to reach?
  - From bed?
  - In hallway?

### Look at the floors for \_\_\_\_\_ :

- ⇐ Holes under rugs? Clutter?
- ⇐ Wrinkled carpets?
- ⇐ Cords?
- ⇐ Oxygen tubing?

### Footwear:

Is it sturdy, non skid, well fitting footwear?

## FALLS PREVENTION

Home Care Client's at risk of falls include those who:

- Have a history of a fall in the past year.
- Have a history of neurological problems (stroke, alzheimer's, Parkinson's) or vestibular disease (vertigo, dizziness, etc.)
- Have a history of degenerative joint disease of the knees &/or hips.
- Are ages 65 or older
- Client's on certain medications such as sedatives

## Why is a fall in older adults so serious?

Statistics from the Center for Disease Control's (CDC) National Center for Injury Prevention and Control show that:

- Twenty to 30 percent of older adults who fall suffer moderate to severe injuries such as bruises, hip fractures, or head traumas. These injuries can make it hard to get around and limit independent living. They also can increase the risk of early death (Alexander et al. 1992; Sterling et al. 2001).
- The risk of being seriously injured in a fall increases with age. Adults 85 and older who fall are four to five times more likely to be injured than people aged 65 to 74 (Stevens et al. 2005)
- Most fractures among older adults are caused by falls (Bell et al. 2000).
- Falls are the most common cause of traumatic brain injuries, or TBI (Jager et al. 2000). In 2000, 46 percent of deaths from falling among older adults were caused by a traumatic brain injury (Stevens et al. 2006).

**Did You Know? Fall prevention is an important factor in decreasing avoidable. Hospitalizations, placement in facility based care (such as Nursing Homes) and improving patient safety.**

## **Caregiver Checklist:**

*Do you:*

- Report all falls (even unwitnessed) to your supervisor? The patient may report a fall to you but be hesitant to tell the nurse or therapist.
- Report any changes in balance or gait that you observe?
- Report any symptom that could lead to falls (e.g.: "I can't see as well as I used to.")
- Know how many falls occur each month at your agency?
- Report any environmental problems that could cause falls to your supervisor?
- Report patients not following fall prevention measures?
- Reinforce all fall prevention interventions?
- Ask your supervisor if you have questions about these?
- Reinforce the need for the patient to rise slowly to avoid getting dizzy and falling?
- Know how to assist a patient after a fall?
- Discuss this with your supervisor and know your agency policies and procedures?
- Report any concerns with defective mobility equipment to your supervisor?
- Reinforce the need for patient to wear shoes or slippers with rubber soles and **avoid** loose fitting shoes or slippers that are open toed/flip-flop style?
- Remind the patient to use their walker or cane correctly?

## BE SURE TO KNOW WHAT IS ON THE CARE PLAN :

### □ Precautions

Hip precautions

Weight bearing precautions

Other appliances- Braces, immobilizers

Observe improvement or decline

Observe safety issues

Hear responses from family members

Recognize the need for assistance with transfers and gait

How much assistance they need: when and where - Use of gait aide; steps, ramps, uneven surfaces

### Other tips for falls prevention –

Keep pathways clear, make sure there is good lighting, notify your supervisor if you think your client would benefit from grab bars or rails in the shower, on stairs, in the bathroom.

### **The National Nursing Assistants Week**

Take place from June 16-23. The annual event recognizes and celebrates nursing assistants for the daily care they provide in nursing homes, home care, and other long-term care settings

Thank you for all you do!

### **Note:**

**Over 50 percent of people hospitalized for falls are discharged to a nursing facility**, 16 percent return home, 13 percent have care, home and health 8 percent enter rehabilitation.

Being afraid of falling is understandable, especially after a person has had a fall. It's good for clients to be concerned about safety and to be more careful about moving around. However, **sometimes fear of falling makes elders stop doing things that they are still capable of doing.**

When they stop doing their usual physical or social activities, they risk becoming physically weaker and then more fearful.

**This downward cycle results in them *increasing* the risk of falling- be sure to talk to your supervisor if you notice this with your client's.**

**Older adults can** ask their doctor or pharmacist to review their medicines — both prescription and over-the counter — to reduce side effects and interactions.

## **In-Service – POST-TEST on Falls Prevention**

### **Circle True or False on the following questions:**

1. A Home Care client who has a history of falls is not at risk of falling again.

True

False

2. The risk of being seriously injured in a fall increases with age.

True

False

3. A Home Care Client's environment does not have anything to do with a risk of falls.

True

False

4. Proper lighting in a client's home is an important factor in falls prevention.

True

False

5. Most fractures among older adults are caused by falls.

True

False

6. The risk of falling increases after an elderly individual comes home from the hospital.

True

False

### **Circle the correct answer or answers for the following questions:**

7. Fall prevention is an important factor in:

- a) decreasing avoidable hospitalizations
- b) helping avoid possible Nursing home Placement
- c) improving patient safety
- d) helping client's feel safe
- e) all of the above

8. A checklist of for In-Home Aide's to keep in mind in falls prevention include:

- a) Report all falls (even unwitnessed) to your supervisor
- b) Report any environmental problems that could cause falls to your supervisor
- c) Report patients not following fall prevention measures
- d) Reinforce all fall prevention interventions
- e) Reinforce the need for the patient to rise slowly to avoid getting dizzy and falling
- f) All of the above

### **Fill in the Blanks:**

9. When caring for your In-Home Client, Be sure to know what is on the \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

10. Sometimes \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ makes elders stop doing things that they are still capable of doing.

**Bonus-** June 16-23 is: \_\_\_\_\_ ( fill in the blanks)