

## Fall Prevention



Nurse Aide Education Program  
Inservice/Continuing Education Credit Courses

## Fall Prevention

### Introduction



Slips, trips and falls are the most common type of household accident. Most of these are preventable. The consequences of falls can range from minor bruises to fractures to life-threatening injuries. Hip fractures are one of the most common types of fractures from falls and can lead to more serious health problems.

Persons with disabilities and the elderly are often more seriously injured by falls, as their bones are more fragile due to decreased exercise and nutritional deficits. Individuals receiving services in their home should be assessed to identify factors which may lead to falls and identify strategies to improve the safety of the home.



Risk factors in the home:

1. Clutter in and around popular rooms (books, clothes, etc.)
2. Throw rugs
3. Exposed electrical cords
4. Slippery or wet floors
5. Uneven floors or stairs
6. Poor lighting



Personal risk factors for falling:

1. Bad footwear (or no footwear)
2. Age-related physiological changes (poorer eyesight, muscle weakness, etc.)
3. Medical conditions
4. Instability, balance and physical activity
5. Use of mobility aides
6. Drugs (medication and recreational) and alcohol use

### Fall Prevention



The likelihood of falls in the home can be minimized by preventing hazards.

1. Clear walkways, move rugs and electrical cords
2. Use non-skid mats or carpeting where needed
3. Immediately clean up spills
4. Mark uneven floors or stairs with colored tape
5. Improve lighting where needed
6. Leave furniture in the same place

The risk of falls can also be reduced when you follow these practices with the person at risk:

1. Person should wear securely fastened non-skid shoes that support the ankles
2. Person should not wear loose, baggy clothing that drags the floor or wraps around the legs
3. Keep frequently used personal items close to person for easy access
4. Brakes must be locked prior helping person into or out of wheelchair
5. Bed wheels must be locked when helping person in and out of bed or when providing care
6. Return the hospital bed to the lowest position when the person is at rest in the bed

7. Offer trips to the bathroom frequently

### Managing Falls

If a person starts to fall, never try to catch him or her. Put yourself in a good position to help support the person and use your body to slide him or her to the floor. If you try to stop a fall, you may hurt yourself and/or the Consumer.



To manage a fall, widen your stance. Bring the person's body close to your own to break the fall. Bend your knees. Support the Consumer as you lower him/her to the floor. If someone else is in the house, ask for their help. Do not try to get the person up after a fall without assistance. Call 911 when necessary

When a person falls while you are providing care, determine the condition of the person. If the fall requires emergency treatment, call 911. You also must notify the responsible family member/legal guardian, the Consumer's physician and the case manager.

### Other Special Conditions

Transferring from bed to wheelchair:

1. Lock the wheels of the wheelchair
2. Stand in front of the Consumer
3. Stand with feet about 12 inches apart. Bend your knees
4. Place your arms around the Consumer's torso under the arms
5. Ask the Consumer to place his hands on your shoulders if possible
6. Provide instructions to allow Consumer to help with transfer

Instructions may include:

*"When you start to stand, push with your hands against the bed."*

*"Once standing, reach for the chair with your stronger hand."*

7. With your legs, brace Consumer's lower legs to prevent slipping
8. Count to three to alert the Consumer
9. On three, slowly help Consumer to stand
10. Help Consumer pivot to front of wheelchair
11. Back of Consumer's legs should be against wheelchair
12. Lower Consumer into the wheelchair
13. Reposition Consumer with hips touching back of wheelchair
14. Place Consumer's feet on footrest
15. Make Consumer comfortable

### Consumer in the Wheelchair

When a Consumer is in a wheelchair, he or she should be repositioned every two hours or as needed. The reasons for doing this are to:



1. Promote comfort
2. Decrease the likelihood of pressure sores
3. Increase circulation
4. Exercises joints
5. Promotes muscle tone

The Consumer's body should be kept in good alignment while in the wheelchair. Special cushions, pillows and soft blankets can be used for support. The hips should be well back in the chair.

### Summary:

Falls are very common, and they could happen at any time. As a caregiver, you need to be familiar with ways to prevent falls from happening. You must also know how to manage them in case one occurs under your care.