



Holiday Season Fall Prevention



It has become well known that seniors aged 65 and older are at particular risk for falls. An injury from a fall can be life changing events.

The good news is that most falls are preventable!

The holiday season is a prime time for falls because of the hazards of putting up decorations from elevated positions, carrying heavy loads, change in routine, day light savings early darkness and other season activities.

Falls occur from ladders and roofs while handing holiday lights, from standing on chairs and tables while decorating Christmas trees or hanging decorations. Tripping over ornaments, extension cords, tree skirts also cause fall injuries.

Decorating Tips: If you have issues with balance, coordination or dizziness, you should consider asking someone else to put up your decorations.

Never stand on furniture. **When using a ladder** make sure that it is on a firm, even surface and always have a responsible adult standing by to help. Do not reach too far when on the ladder and do not stand on the top two rungs. Instead, take the time to climb down and reposition it.

Make sure **step stools** are locked open securely and use the handle.

Prepare for senior visitors by making your home safer.

Clear Walking Paths: remove floor clutter: papers, wires, boxes, excess furniture and throw rugs to make a clear waking path in every room. Allow for extra room for those using walkers, canes or wheelchairs.

Light up Walking Paths: Darkness comes early now, so improved outdoor lighting. Always use a flashlight when walking in the dark. Inside, add night lights in the hallways, stairs and bathrooms.

Overnight guests who have difficulty managing stairs may need to stay downstairs. Prepare the bathroom with grab bars and a shower mat.

The excitement of lots of people coming and going, running children, pets and the change in routine may be overwhelming, so plan ahead and be considerate of mobility changes that come with age.

Seniors can decrease the risk of falls by

- Slowing down and allowing enough time to get where you are going. Chances of falling increase when you are running late and rushing.
- Use a cane or walker or hold someone's hand when in an unfamiliar areas.
- Wear the right shoes.
- Wear your glasses and hearing aids as they help balance and awareness.
- Keep your hands free. Avoid carrying lots of packages or bags.
- Stay Hydrated. If you drink alcohol, drink in moderation and be aware of medication interactions.
- When using stairs, ALWAYS use the rail.
- Be aware of your limitations and don't hesitate to ask for help.

Prevention is the best medicine, but if you or a loved one does sustain an injury, the emergency care team at Methodist Healthcare is available 24/7.

For additional Fall Prevention Education, visit our website: SAHealth.com

I'll be teaching a Free 1 hour class, Wednesday Dec 12th. 9150 Huebner Road

Sign up on the website under Calendar of Events/ Fall class



Dr. Gina Dawson P.T. Dec. 2018