Reducing Falls During COVID-19

During these uncertain times, the Falls Free Vermont Coalition would like to address the importance of staying healthy and safe. More time spent at home can lead to less physical activity, weakening our muscles and bones. Falls prevention is more important now than ever. According to the Centers for Disease Control, one out of every four adults age 65 and older will fall. Falls can result in serious injuries including bone fractures and head injuries. What can you do to prevent falls and seek appropriate care?

Preventing Falls

- Keep walkways clear, reduce clutter and secure loose rugs.
- Use nightlights to see well in the dark.
- Make sure that your vision and hearing are tested regularly.
- Use assistive devices such as a cane or walker if needed.
- Wear the correct footwear and focus on proper posture and balance.
- Avoid excessive alcohol intake.
- Review medications regularly with providers to ensure they won’t cause dizziness or other falls risks.
- Install handrails if needed in bathrooms, halls and stairways.

Performing Regular Physical Activity

- Weight-bearing activity and resistance exercises can improve strength, posture and balance, which may help reduce the risk of falls. Weight-bearing exercise includes walking, jogging, Tai Chi, stair climbing and dancing, among other activities.
- Some people will take part in online exercise classes or could just perform simple activities safely at home.
- Physical therapy can also be very useful in helping people learn and perform different exercises.
- A person should discuss any concerns with their medical provider before starting any exercise program.

What if I Fall?

- The first thing to do is to not panic! Remain calm and still. Do not move for a few minutes as getting up too quickly could cause more harm.
- Figure out if are injured. Slowly start to move your hands and feet and then your arms and legs to check for pain.
- If there are no injuries, slowly roll onto your side. Turn your head first, followed by your shoulders, arm, hips and leg.
- Slowly push up into a crawling position and crawl to a piece of sturdy furniture.
- Rise up slowly into the chair and sit for a few minutes to see how you feel.
- If you are injured or cannot get up, call for help either out loud or with the use of a medical alert help button.

Should I call 911 if I fall?

If you fall and need help, call 911. Do not risk further injury, illness or complications as a result of a fall by not seeking medical help. We know that many people have been avoiding the hospital, due to the fear of exposure. Our hospitals and health care providers have been taking the appropriate precautions to safely treat our community and Vermont has maintained low numbers of COVID-19 positive exposures. It is safe to go to the hospital if needed at this time.

Stay strong and safe!

Falls Free Vermont Coalition

Connecting people to falls prevention programs, lifestyle adjustments and community resources.

To learn more ways to reduce preventable falls visit https://fallsfreevermont.org