

Did You Know?

...Falls are the leading cause of injury hospitalization in the Northwest Region.

...Falls are the second leading cause of death in the Northwest Region.

...More than one third of adults over age 65 fall each year.

...Nationally in 2004, more than 14,900 people over age 65 died from falls related injuries.

...People 75 and older who fall are four to five times more likely to be admitted to a long-term care facility for a year or longer.

...Of all fall-related injuries, hip fractures cause the most deaths and lead to the most severe health problems and reduced quality of life.

**Source: CDC*

Community Resources for Seniors

For more information about falls prevention resources such as senior exercise classes, grab bar installation projects, and other community efforts to prevent senior falls, check these resources:

- Contact your local senior center
- Contact your local parks and recreation department
- Contact your local swimming pool
- Go online to www.fallsfreewashington.org for a list of senior exercise classes by county
- Check out DSHS Aging and Adult Services at www.aasa.dshs.wa.gov
- Call the Washington Association of Area Agencies on Aging at 360-485-9761 or go to their website at www.agingwashington.org
- Call 211. This number will connect you to an operator who can direct you to local senior social services—everything from Meals on Wheels to senior exercise classes to other community resources for seniors
- Check out national resources as well. AARP is a national organization that focuses on senior issues. Find their website at www.aarp.org

*Northwest Region
Emergency Medical
Services and Trauma
Care Council*

Falls Prevention Guidelines for Seniors



For more information on falls prevention programs and resources in the Northwest Region, please visit our website at:

www.nwrems.org

Or call:

360-479-5631

Falls Prevention Tips

___ Wear well-fitting, securely tied shoes that have non-slip soles.

___ Install hand rails on stairways and grab bars by the bathtub.

___ Use a walker or cane if prescribed by your doctor.

___ Clearly mark the edge of your outside stairs to make them more visible.

___ Remove clutter, throw rugs, extension cords and other items that can cause falls.

___ Drink alcohol moderately if at all; drinking alcohol increases the chance of a fall.

___ Be careful walking on uneven surfaces.

___ Make sure you have good lighting in rooms, hallways and outside. Use nightlights as well.

___ Exercise! Even moderate exercise can improve strength and balance.

___ Install rubber treads in your bathtub for added safety.

___ Avoid climbing up ladders, step stools or chairs to reach things.

___ Know where your pets are before you step...tripping over pets is fairly common.

___ Furniture (tables, chairs) should be sturdy enough to hold your weight if you need to lean on them for support.

___ When you get up from lying down, sit up and wait before standing to avoid light-headedness.

___ Have your vision checked and corrected if needed and keep your glasses clean.

___ If you are prone to falls, always wear an electronic monitoring device in order to call for help quickly if you fall.

___ Be careful when you walk outside. Ice, snow and rain can cause slippery walking conditions.

___ Rest if needed. Don't force yourself to walk long distances or when you are tired or distracted.

___ Take the elevator instead of the escalator or stairs.

___ Know your medications—some medicines can cause loss of balance. Talk with your doctor or pharmacist about this.

___ Clean up liquid spills on the floor quickly to prevent slipping and falling.