

# OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY FACT SHEET

## Fall Prevention for Older Adults

Falls are the leading cause of injury and accidental death in adults over the age of 65 years. New or unfamiliar surroundings, improper footwear, cumbersome furniture arrangements, and distractions all can cause a person to accidentally stumble and fall, causing a serious injury, even death.

However, implementing a few prevention practices at home can decrease a person's risk of an unnecessary fall.

### What can a person do to prevent falling?

- Do not walk and talk at the same time. Concentrate on the task of walking and continue the conversation after you've reached a safe place.
- Wear appropriate footwear. When walking long distances or in unfamiliar areas, wear flat, nonslip shoes. Also wear shoes that fit well and are comfortable.
- Arrange furniture so that it creates plenty of room to walk freely. If you use a walking aid, ensure that doorways and hallways are large enough to get through with any devices you may use.
- Install railings in hallways and grab bars in the bathroom and shower to prevent slipping.
- Be sure you have adequate lighting throughout your house.
- Install nonslip strips or a rubber mat on the floor of the tub or shower.
- Remove throw rugs or secure them firmly to the floor.
- Use caution when carrying items while walking.
- Use a nightlight when getting out of bed at night.
- Stay active to maintain overall strength and endurance.
- Know your limitations. If there is a task you can not complete with ease, do not risk a fall by trying to complete it.

### Need more information?

If you would like to consult an occupational therapist about making your home safer, practitioners are available through most hospitals, community clinics, and medical centers.

Occupational therapists and occupational therapy assistants are trained in helping both adults and children with a broad range of physical, developmental, and psychological conditions. Practitioners also help clients in wellness techniques that may prevent injury and disease. Contact your local health officials for more information.

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## OTAC Vision & Mission

### VISION STATEMENT:

A world where all people participate in meaningful occupations to optimize their life experience.

### MISSION STATEMENT:

OTAC is the collective voice that serves, promotes, and supports the profession of occupational therapy and its practitioners.



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