

## Falls and Prevention

An injury from a fall can be a life-changing event at any age, but they can be especially devastating to the elderly. The risk for falling increases with each decade of life, and can have a serious impact on your health. From an orthopaedic standpoint, they can cause severe fractures that may require surgery. As the treatment of fractures can be difficult and may cause lifelong limitations, prevention becomes increasingly important as we age. Falls can occur for a variety of reasons. Falls can be due to other medical problems, lightheadedness, or from standing too quickly.

Listed below are some common prevention methods:

- **Exercise.** Increasing your body strength and balance with exercise can help to prevent falls if done in a safe manner.
- **Check your vision.** Staying up to date on your vision screenings yearly will allow for you to see those small dips and bumps in your pathway.
- **Remove things from high traffic areas.** By removing thick rugs or cords from high traffic areas, you are helping to prevent tripping/slipping on those items.
- **Add rails or grab bars.** By putting bars next to your shower, toilet, and stairway, you will have an extra safety measure and something to make your transition from one place to another easier.
- **Improve your house lighting.** Brighter lights will help you to see well. Our vision decreases as we get older, especially at night.
- **Wear shoes.** Wearing shoes, both inside and outside of the house, will give you a better grip. Slippers and socks are sometimes too slippery.
- **Make objects more accessible.** If objects you use daily are too high or not in an easy to get position, stepping on a footstool or running for the phone may throw you off balance.
- **Use non-slip mats.** By adding floor mats to bare shower floors and making sure that the rugs you have do not slip, you can help to prevent slips and falls.