

Chronic Conditions Tied To Increased Falls

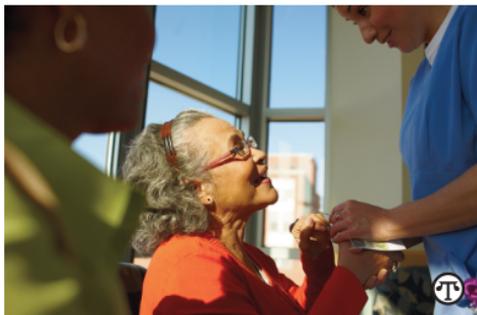
(NAPSA)—According to the National Council on Aging, 80 percent of seniors have at least one chronic condition and 68 percent have two or more.

A new analysis of 145,000 users of Philips Lifeline, a medical alert service, revealed seniors with common chronic conditions, including COPD, diabetes and heart conditions, fell more than their peers who did not have any of these conditions. In fact, seniors with COPD fell 42 percent more, while diabetes patients fell 30 percent more. Those with heart conditions fell 29 percent more. With so many people affected by chronic disease and at risk of falling, it is important to take steps to help seniors maintain their everyday routines without worrying.

Seniors should feel empowered to live an active and independent lifestyle and feel safe while they do it. If you are—or care about—a senior suffering from chronic conditions, you can take steps to reduce the risk of falls and help yourself on your way to peace of mind.

- **Have one primary care physician.** More than one medical team can complicate things. Having one primary doctor to “own” your conditions will let your case be managed holistically. Further, keeping your doctor in the loop about your symptoms, questions or concerns is key. This person can be a tremendous resource, while also providing the clinical advice and support you need.

- **Manage your medications.** Having several chronic conditions can come with the burden of several medications with different side effects. For older adults, managing these medications can be quite a challenge. Dizziness and disorientation have been reported with some medications, which can affect your fall risk. Consult your doctor, who can explain the risks associated with the medications



An automatic fall detection device can get you help if you need it.

you have been prescribed while playing an active role in your treatment regimen.

- **Adjust the home to fit your needs.** Easy changes to the home, such as adding ramps and bathtub rails, for example, can impact your lifestyle positively and increase your home’s functionality.

- **Consider medical alert devices.** If you do fall, devices such as Philips Lifeline HomeSafe with AutoAlert (automatic fall detection) can automatically access a response associate if it detects falls that otherwise would not be reported and will help you get the assistance you request. Having a medical alert device can also help you avoid the medical complications associated with long lie times.

- **Join a community.** Organizations such as the American Diabetes Association can help you find experts in your condition’s landscape and provide you with professional opinion and supplemental support. These organizations can also offer useful resources as well as a connection to patients with the same condition to whom you can relate.

Making these simple changes and addressing the concern for safety proactively can help you avoid an injury or an accident involving you or your loved one. Don’t let your fear of falls dictate your life. If you enable yourself with the right resources, you can take back your confidence today.