

## Reducing The Risks Of Falls

(NAPSA)—Falls are a serious health risk for millions of older Americans. One in three Americans over the age of 65 falls each year. Among older adults, falls are the leading cause of injury deaths and the most common cause of injuries and hospital admissions for trauma. However, as predictable as falls are, they are also preventable.

### Medications And Fall Risks

Researchers are discovering a direct relationship between the drugs an older person takes and the frequency of falls. Knowing the side effects of each drug you are taking may help reduce your risk of falling.

Some medications—such as a beta-blocker that is used by many people after a heart attack—have side effects, such as drowsiness, fainting or extreme weakness. Some over-the-counter medications can increase the risk of falls, especially when combined with prescription medications. Antidepressants can cause dizziness and lightheadedness, while barbiturates, used to reduce anxiety, can also cause clumsiness as well as dizziness and weakness. Even diabetic medicines (noninsulin dependent) for type 1 diabetes (insulin-dependent) can increase the risk of falls due to low blood sugar.

Always ask your doctor what the medication does, what the possible side effects are and whether or not the medicine will react with any other medicines you take, suggest experts at Interim HealthCare.

### Home Modifications

Simple modifications around the home, various steps to build



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bone strength, and a common-sense approach to safety can prevent or make less life threatening 30 percent to 40 percent of all falls. Most falls involving people ages 65 and older occur in the home on stairs or in bedrooms, bathrooms or kitchens, usually while performing routine activities. Patients and families have increased confidence and decreased fears once safety in the home has been established.

### Exercise Is Important

For healthy older adults, exercise decreases the risk of fall-related fractures. Exercises that improve balance and coordination are most helpful. Lack of exercise leads to weakness and increases the chances of falling.

Most falls in the elderly are predictable, preventable and not due solely to the aging process.

Interim HealthCare, a leading provider of home care and supplemental health care staffing, offers a free online independent living assessment. Visit [www.interimhealthcare.com](http://www.interimhealthcare.com).