Facts About Senior Falls

- For people ages 65 and older, falls are the leading cause of injury.
- Among seniors, falls are the underlying cause of a large proportion of fatal traumatic brain injuries (TBI). From 1989 to 1998, the fall-induced TBI death rate among people ages 80 and older increased 60%.
- The risk of falling increases exponentially with age.
- Older adults who have fallen previously or who stumble frequently are two to three times more likely to fall within the next year.
- For people ages 65 and older, two-thirds to one-half of falls occur in or around the home.
- At least 95% of hip *fractures* (break in bone) among older adults are caused by falls.
- Fall related death rates and hip fracture hospitalization rates have been increasing.

FREQUENTLY REPORTED RISK FACTORS FOR FALLING

- Having had a previous fall.
- Having lower body weakness or gait or balance problems.
- Having physical limitations, such as visual problems or problems with balance.
- Having more than one *chronic* (longstanding) disease, history of stroke, Parkinson's Disease, neuromuscular disease, urinary incontinence, or postural hypotension.
- Being *cognitively impaired* (awareness, thinking and judgment may be affected).
- Taking more than four medications or using *psychoactive* (affecting your mind and thinking) medications.

FALL PREVENTION RESEARCH

Preventative programs are most effective when they are designed to reach those at greatest risk.

Some information courtesy of Centers for Disease Control and Prevention National Center for Injury Prevention and Control.

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