

# *Standing Together to Prevent Falls*

AOTA/APTA's AGPT

Fall Prevention Presentation



# Are falls preventable?



Photo from [giftsandcollectiblesgalore.wordpress.com](http://giftsandcollectiblesgalore.wordpress.com)

**YES!**

**Falls are largely  
preventable!  
Come learn how.**

# Today's Discussion

- ▶ Definition of a fall
- ▶ Fear of falling
- ▶ Risk factors for falling
- ▶ Action steps to reduce YOUR fall risk



Illustration © Timur

# What is a “fall”?

- Landing on the ground or some lower surface when you didn't intend to be there.
- Includes slips, trips, etc.
- Does not include a medical event.

*Schumway-Cook, 2000*



# Have you had a fall?

- ▶ Have you had a fall in the past year? Did you tell your primary care provider?
- ▶ Were you hurt?
- ▶ Do you worry about falling?
- ▶ Do you feel unsteady when standing or walking?
- ▶ A previous fall increases your future fall risk.

# Do you limit activities?

- **Fear of Falling** is a lasting concern about falling that may cause a person to stop doing activities s/he remains able to do.
- Fear of falling increases future fall risk.
- *Tinetti and Powell, 1993*



[www.bing.com](http://www.bing.com)

# Why does fear of falling matter?

- May stop you from activities
- Legs weaken with inactivity
- Inactivity leads to falls
- May make the person feel alone
- May cause depression



[www.ncoa.org](http://www.ncoa.org)

# Types of Fall Risk Factors

**Most falls result from a number of risk factors:**

- ▶ **Physical risk factors:** Changes in your body that increase your risk for a fall
- ▶ **Behavioral risk factors:** Things we do or don't do that increase our fall risk
- ▶ **Environmental risk factors:** Hazards in our home or community



# Fall Risk Factors

## You CAN change:

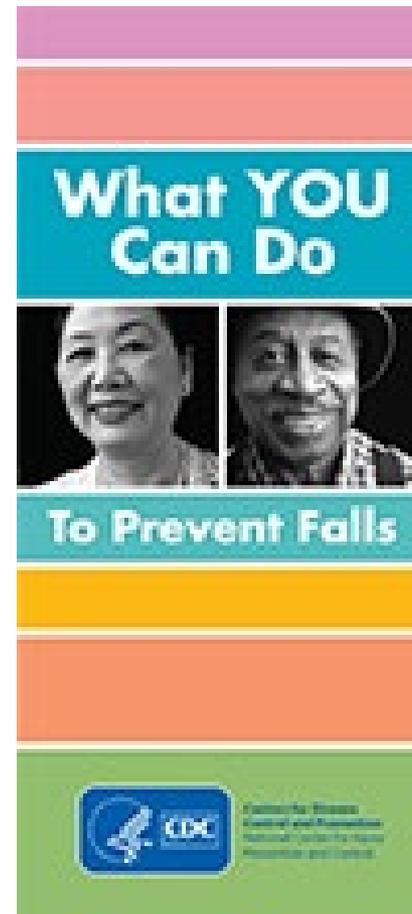
- ▶ Physical inactivity
- ▶ Home environment
- ▶ Vision
- ▶ Medication Use
- ▶ Fear of falling
- ▶ Social isolation
- ▶ Weakness
- ▶ Improper use of assistive devices

## You CAN'T change:

- ▶ Age
- ▶ Gender
- ▶ Ethnic background

# What can YOU do to prevent falls?

- ▶ Exercise to improve your balance and strength. It takes 50 hours every 6 months to improve balance.
- ▶ Have your doctor or pharmacist review your medicines
- ▶ Have your vision checked
- ▶ Make your home safer



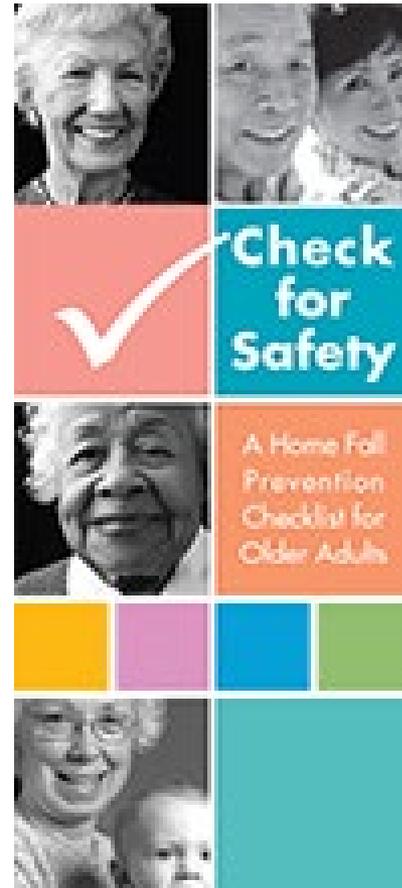
# Exercise Recommendations



- ▶ Talk to your doctor before starting an exercise program.
- ▶ Begin with PT or fall prevention classes.
- ▶ Be sure classes are for *your* age group &/or ability level.
- ▶ Stick with it!

# Environmental Recommendations

- ▶ Identify and eliminate fall hazards in your home and community
- ▶ *Check for Safety* Brochure in CDC's STEADI Toolkit
- ▶ An OT or PT can help identify safety issues and solutions



AGS/BGS, 2010; Panel on Prevention, 2011

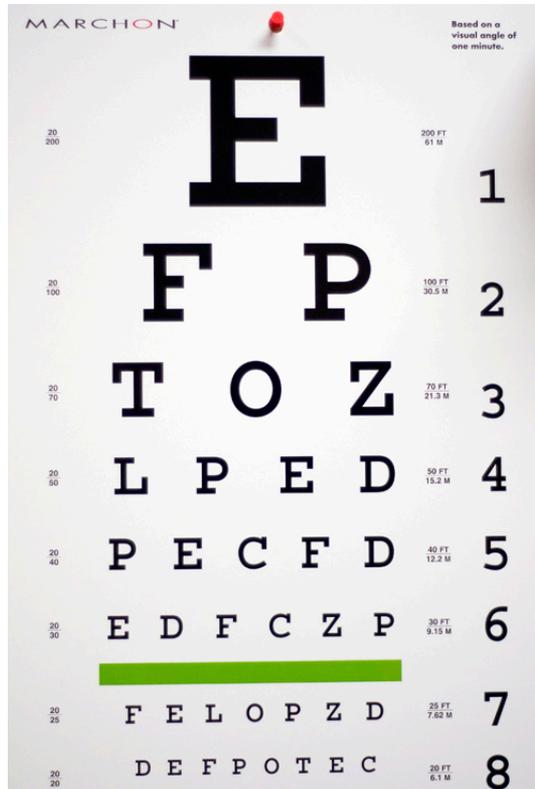
# Medications and Falls Risk

- ▶ Side effects may make you dizzy
- ▶ Medication changes can increase fall risk
- ▶ Use one pharmacy.
- ▶ Ask for an annual medication review.
- ▶ Be sure you can read your labels.



[https://d1hekt5vpuuw9b.cloudfront.net/assets/article/fe274ef18e93e75562dc05fe87b18316\\_are-you-taking-too-much-medicine-580x326\\_featuredImage.jpg](https://d1hekt5vpuuw9b.cloudfront.net/assets/article/fe274ef18e93e75562dc05fe87b18316_are-you-taking-too-much-medicine-580x326_featuredImage.jpg)

# Vision and Falls Risk



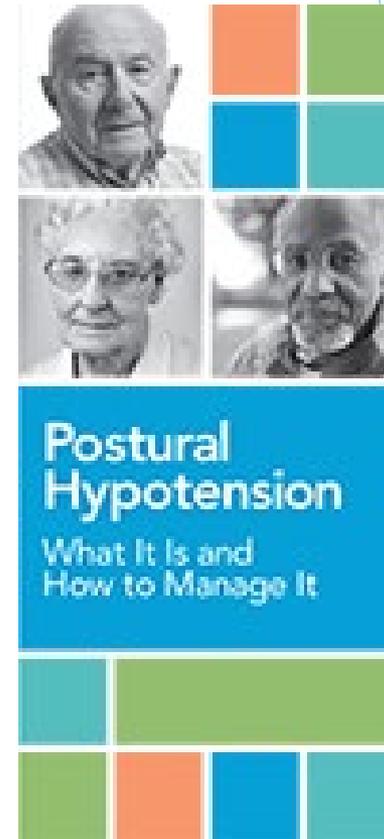
[http://www.steadmaneye.com/clipart/eyecharts/eye\\_chart.jpg](http://www.steadmaneye.com/clipart/eyecharts/eye_chart.jpg)

- Ask for annual eye exams after age 50.
- Multifocal lenses may blur or distort your vision looking down. Use separate reading glasses.
- Removing cataract(s) may reduce fall risk.

*AGS & BGS, 2010*

# Blood Pressure and Fall Risk

- ▶ Check your blood pressure regularly.
- ▶ If you get dizzy when you stand up, see your doctor and have your ‘sit to stand’ blood pressure checked.
- ▶ Some blood pressure medications increase fall risk; speak with your doctor. Be very careful after a beginning a new medication.



# Chronic Conditions and Fall Risk

- ▶ Chronic Conditions may contribute to your fall risk. Careful management will limit the risk.
  - ▶ Diabetes
  - ▶ Arthritis
  - ▶ Stroke
  - ▶ Neurological disorders like Multiple Sclerosis (MS) or Parkinson's
  - ▶ Chronic Pain
  - ▶ Depression
  - ▶ Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)
  - ▶ Sleep disorders

# Risk of Falling May Increase

- Change in your medications
- Illness or infection
- Pain
- Lack of sleep
- Sad or worried
- Reduced activity level
- Change in use of cane or walker
- Move to new home



<http://www.opinionscentral.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Medline-Folding-Rollator-Walker-with-Folding-8-inch-Wheel.jpg>

# Start Small

Choose one risk factor to address first ---

- **Pharmacist & Doctor** - review medications for side effects that may cause you to fall
- **Occupational Therapist** - home assessment and recommendations to make your home safer
- **Physical Therapist** - help with physical activity, balance, strength, and moving safely

# If a Fall Occurs .....

- ▶ Check for injury
- ▶ Call for help, if needed
- ▶ Seek medical attention right away if you might have hit your head
- ▶ Call your doctor
- ▶ Check for safety hazards
- ▶ **Learn how to get up safely from your physical therapist**



<http://www.bing.com/images/search?q=getting+up+from+floor+with+chair+photo&view=detailv2&id=6078B0575525F1E0A63A99D372BE2F78F77BF411&selectedIndex=0&ccid=U1AEMRPq&simid=608013721659769884&thid=JN.I5Qt1AlQlz9v31ZkHSXKJg&ajaxhist=0>

# Questions / Discussion



Thank You for  
Coming!

# Need more information?

- ▶ A Physical Therapist's Guide to Falls:

<http://www.moveforwardpt.com/symptomsconditionsdetail.aspx?cid=85726fb6-14c4-4c16-9a4c-3736dceac9f0>

- ▶ Remaining in Your Home as you Age:

<https://www.aota.org/About-Occupational-Therapy/Patients-Clients/Adults.aspx>

- ▶ The AARP Home Fit Guide:

<http://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/info-2014/aarp-home-fit-guide-aging-in-place.html>

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