



MOBILITY

10/26



Preventing Falls

Tips to Keep You on Your Feet

Each year millions of Americans go to the emergency department after an injury from a fall.

"These falls can cause serious injuries—back fractures, hip fractures as well as head trauma," says Dr. Suzanne Blood, M.D., chief of palliative care and geriatrics at Hudson Headwaters. Some people are never able to recover their pre-injury mobility.

Several kinds of health care providers can help those at risk of falling. "It's actually a group effort," Blood says. Your provider can be the first step. They can develop a prevention plan and refer you to other specialists if needed.

The biggest risk factor for being injured from a fall is being over age 65. People younger than that may be at increased risk of falling when they engage in certain activities, like sports, or because of certain health conditions but children and young adults typically fall without being seriously injured.

People with weak bones are more likely to break something during a fall. As you get older, your bones become less dense, becoming thinner and more spongy. If that progresses too far, it's called osteoporosis. Osteoporosis makes your bones fragile. Having enough calcium and vitamin D can help keep your bones strong. So can getting treatment for osteoporosis if needed.

Other risk factors include difficulties walking or keeping your balance. Problems with foot pain or unsafe shoes can make these more difficult. Certain medicines you're taking might cause you to feel tired or woozy. Some people have a drop in blood pressure when they stand up. This can make you feel dizzy and fall.

As you age, your eyesight, hearing, and reflexes may not be as sharp as they once were. These changes can make it

more likely you'll stumble and fall. For older adults who have already fallen, the risk of falling is much greater.

Studies have shown that both individual and group exercise classes can help prevent falls. This is true even for people 65 and older who are at higher risk of falls only because of their age.

You may want to fall-proof your home. An occupational therapist can teach you about the safety hazards in your home. Keep your home tidy and well-lit to avoid stumbling over objects and avoid having small area rugs that you could trip on. Making a habit of holding onto the handrails when you use stairs can keep you safer, too.

If you fall, it's important to tell your provider, especially if you're an older adult. "This is something that you really want to pay attention to," Blood advises. Your medical provider can help you make changes in your life to prevent another fall.

Maintain Your Health & Independence

Lower Your Risk of Falling

Physical activity is an important part of healthy aging. Exercise will help you build muscles and give you greater balance. Start today by:

- Talking openly with your health care provider about falls
- Finding out about the side effects of any medicines you take
- Staying physically active to improve your balance and strength
- Having your eyes and hearing checked regularly
- Seeing your health care provider about any foot problems—make sure to discuss proper footwear
- Making your home safer—remove things you can trip over from stairs and walkways and have grab bars and non-slip mats in bathrooms
- Holding on to handrails when using stairs

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\$1 Million

Special Health Care Initiative Grant

HEALTH FOUNDATION

Charles R. Wood Foundation Grants \$1 Million to Launch Hudson Headwaters' Mobile Health Program

The Charles R. Wood Foundation has awarded a \$1 million Special Health Care Initiative Grant in support of Hudson Headwaters Health Network's Mobile Health Pilot Project.

The Charles R. Wood Foundation launched its Special Health Initiative earlier this year to attract innovative funding opportunities that improve population health outcomes in the region. This grant award is the largest private contribution ever received by Hudson Headwaters and will be spread over three years.

As the region's leader in advanced primary care, Hudson Headwaters' mobile health project was selected for its emphasis on partnerships and data. The pilot phase will help Hudson Headwaters plan and scale for the region's first primary care mobile health delivery system.

"The Charles R. Wood Foundation is pleased to assist Hudson Headwaters with this groundbreaking initiative for health care in the North Country," said Charlene Wood, Chair of the Charles R. Wood Foundation. "We are committed to helping folks in rural areas receive proper

health care and are hopeful this pilot program will continue to encourage other collaborations in the future."

Hudson Headwaters expects the first mobile unit to be operational in 2021. Working alongside community partners, data will help inform where best to deploy mobile resources and meet the need of the region's most vulnerable communities. By the end of the three-year pilot phase, Hudson Headwaters anticipates up to four mobile units serving the greater Adirondack and Glens Falls regions.

Supporting local health care is one of the Charles R. Wood Foundation's longstanding philanthropic priorities as bolstering the availability and quality of health care in the North Country is directly connected to healthy communities and individuals.

"The Charles R. Wood Foundation's tremendous investment is a crucial step for getting mobile health care moving. We are grateful for their leadership commitment, which is an exciting beginning," said Hudson Headwaters Health Foundation President Jim Himoff. "More community support and resources will be essential to realizing the full potential of mobile health."

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