

## *Risks of Falling - Even in Your Own Home*

Elderly safety is a considerable problem in the U.S. as millions of seniors go to the emergency room each year due to injuries caused by accidents in the home. Falls are a leading cause of these mishaps. Yet, with proper equipment and knowledge, risks can be cut dramatically.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) says one out of every three adults over the age of 65 falls each year. Every 18 seconds an older adult is in the emergency room because of a fall. Falls are the most common cause of traumatic brain injuries. Your private home can be a potential battleground for seniors as they navigate rooms, hallways and stairs.

Here are ways you can help ensure a safer home:

**Clear the clutter.** This includes countertops, end tables, hallways and beyond. Clutter of all sizes can make for hazards especially in such places as the kitchen and bathroom.

**Get frequent visual exams.** Poor eyesight is a leading cause of senior falls, and can make it difficult to navigate your home safely. Check your prescription yearly to make sure it is still accurate.

**Equip bathrooms with showers/baths designed for older adults.** Since 80% of senior falls happen in the bathroom, seniors can maintain independence longer with the use of walk-in baths built for elderly adults. For instance, a walk-in tub has anti-slip floors, a 4-inch step up, grab bars, anti-scald technology, mold-resistant walls and a shower wand.

**Participate in moderate exercise.** Staying active is one of the best ways to maintain balance, strength and mobility—as long as you do not overdo it. The CDC suggests Tai Chi or relaxed yoga for balance. Weight-bearing exercises, such as walking and strength training, are also helpful because they increase bone density.

**Install grab bars throughout the home.** The most obvious space demanding grab bars is the bathroom, next to showers, baths, and toilets. Grab bars also help you climb stairs safely, traverse long hallways or use the kitchen more easily.

As we travel our Lenten journey, I hope you will experience Christ's healing peace.  
Blessings,

Peggy Taylor, RN  
Parish Nurse