



Did You Know... Fall Facts

One third of adults over the age 65 experience a fall in the United States each year. That is a large percentage when considering the fact that falls are the leading cause of injury deaths and the most common cause of nonfatal injuries. In 2005, 15,800 individuals 65 and over died from injuries related to falls; approximately 1.8 million were treated for nonfatal injuries due to falls, and over 433,000 of those required hospitalization. The rates continue to significantly rise each decade.

Approximately twenty to thirty percent of falls result in moderate to severe injuries and increase the chance of early death. In addition, most fractures among older adults are caused by falls, with the most common being fractures of the spine, hip, forearm, leg, ankle, pelvis, upper arm, and hand. The results of falls can be devastating. After a fall, even if the adult is not injured, they develop a fear of falling resulting in them limiting their activities which leads to reduced mobility and fitness. This ultimately increases their actual risk of falling.

Older adults need education on how to prevent falls. They can take several steps to protect their independence and reduce their risk of falling. Regular exercise can help reduce falls, especially exercise programs that increase strength and improve balance. The elderly also need to be informed of their medications, they may need to ask their healthcare provider to review their prescription and over the counter medicines to reduce side effects and interactions. It is helpful for elderly adults to have their eyes checked by an eye doctor at least once a year. Last but not least, reducing hazards and improving lighting in their environment can also help reduce falls.

Reference:
www.cdc.com