

# **F A L L   P R E V E N T I O N**

## **PATIENT INFORMATION SHEET**

### **What is “fall prevention”?**

Fall prevention is the process of taking steps to prevent falls from occurring. Falls are the leading cause of injury in people age 65 years and older in the United States. The risk of falling increases with age. The most common injuries related to falls include head injuries, wrist fractures, spine fractures and hip fractures.

### **What can I do to prevent a fall?**

Some simple measures that you can take to prevent a fall from occurring are listed below:

- Exercise to increase bone and muscle strength.
- Wear rubber-soled and low-heeled shoes that are comfortable and fit properly.
- Avoid quick movements when changing positions.
- Progress slowly from “sit to stand to walk”, especially if you experience dizziness.
- Have your vision and hearing checked regularly.
- Talk to your physician about side effects of medications that may effect your coordination and balance.
- Limit your alcohol intake.
- Avoid walking on wet or icy sidewalks alone. Get assistance!

### **What kinds of changes can be made at home to prevent falls?**

- Keep your home free of clutter
- Place a slip-proof mat in the tub.
- Keep electrical and telephone cords out of any pathway. Get a portable phone.
- Attach a bike basket or plastic bag to your walker to carry phone and other items.
- Install adequate lighting throughout your home. Keep a night-light on in the bathroom.
- Install handrails in the bathtub and toilet area.
- Install sturdy handrails on both sides of the stairway(s).
- Be aware of tripping hazards: animals, small rugs, uneven flooring, and unsecured bedding.
- Avoid reaching for far away objects. Avoid stepladders and stools.
- Wipe up any spills immediately.

### **What fall prevention services are available in the community?**

- Balance exercise class through the Healthy Living Center at Greenwich Hospital. Contact Lisa Elpi at 203.863.3751.
- Home safety assessment through the Geriatric Health and Resource Center at Greenwich Hospital. Contact Lori Ann Contadino: 203.863-4374.
- The “Lifeline Service”. This service provides at-risk individuals access to emergency assistance 24 hours a day/seven days a week. For further information, contact 1.800.330.9747 or on the web at [www.lifelinesys.com](http://www.lifelinesys.com).

*For more Patient Education Fact Sheets, see the Greenwich Hospital web site at [www.greenhosp.org](http://www.greenhosp.org) and click on Patient & Visitors, then Patient Education*