

FALL: DON'T LET IT BE YOUR LAST TRIP

Welcome back, class. Last week we started our short two week course about falls. It is such a huge problem. We have to continually try to lessen the problem. If you weren't interested, you wouldn't be reading this.

Medical Risk Factors

- * Heart irregular beats, blood pressure fluctuations.
- * Cancer that may weaken bones.
- * Arthritis of the hip and knee causing weakness and imbalance.
- * Neurological post stroke, Parkinson's, multiple sclerosis.
- * Urine, bladder problems
- * Vision, hearing loss
- * Side effects of medications

Reduce Medical Risk Factors

- * Get a physical and eye exam
- * Evaluate cardiac and blood pressure problems
- * Adequate calcium and Vitamin D intake
- * Exercise if able to increase strength, balance
- * Know side effects of your medication

Make Your Home Safe

- * Risk factors 60% of falls occur at home
- * Caused by
 - Slippery or wet surface
 - Poor lighting
 - Inadequate footwear
 - Cluttered pathways

Safety in Your Home

- * Stairs Good light to see steps
 Don't clutter stairways
 Cover stairs with woven carpet or non-slip treads
 Good handrails on both sides of stairs

- * Bathroom Keep a night light on
 Nonskid rugs that don't bunch up
 Handrails in bath tub and near toilet
 Rubber mat in tub and shower
 Leave bathroom door unlocked

- * Kitchen Don't climb or reach up to high shelves
 Clean up spills right away
 Don't wax floors

- * Living area Arrange furniture to provide open path
 Remove low tables and footrests to avoid tripping

 Keep electrical and telephone cords out of the way

- * Bedroom No throw rugs, extension cords, other floor clutter

 Install night light
 Use a normal height bed

- * Footwear Wear low heel shoes with nonskid soles
 Tied shoes or velcro closure are best
 Avoid thick heavy soles
 A good athletic shoe is hard to beat

Good luck. We are depending on children and helpers of our seniors to make most of this happen.

A fall doesn't have to happen most of the time. Prevention is possible.

All Orthopaedic Surgery problems related to falls or otherwise can be evaluated by Dr. Haverbush at Lakeview Community Wellness Center in Lakeview or at the office in Alma at 315 Warwick Dr., Alma, Michigan.

Future Lakeview Community Wellness Center Clinics are May 30, June 13, 2008.

Be well.

Dr. Haverbush