

# INJURY PREVENTION

In our daily living, many unnecessary accidents can be avoided if we pay attention to safety. The following is a list of some helpful tips regarding safety and accident prevention:

## 1. How to prevent falls and fractures in the elderly?

- Have proper vision and hearing tests regularly.
- Beware of medications that impair coordination and balance.
- Limit intake of alcohol.
- Exercise regularly.
- Wear supportive, rubber-soled, low-heeled shoes.
- Learn about prevention and adhere to prescribed treatment of osteoporosis.
- Use cane or walker; pay close attention when roads are wet or slippery.
- Avoid getting up too quickly after eating, lying down, or resting to prevent light-headedness.

At home:

- Remove clutter from stairways and hallways; maintain adequate lighting and install light switch on both ends.
- Do not place anything slippery by the entryway or hallway.
- Install night-lights in bathroom, non-skid mats or abrasive strips in bath tub/shower.
- Keep phone, flashlight, and lighting control close to bed.
- Place electric cords, telephone wires out of walkways in all living areas.
- Secure rugs to avoid tripping or falling.
- Use a reacher/gripper to help you reach items in high places.
- Organize furniture; chairs and couches should be at the proper height. Chairs with sturdy arms can make getting up easier.

## 2. How to decrease the risk of burns in the elderly?

- Seniors can be forgetful; using a timer while cooking can be helpful.
- Test water temperature before taking a shower or bath.
- Avoid smoking or second-hand smoking. If you have to smoke, use a larger and heavier ashtray. Clean ashtrays frequently.
- Keep flammable objects such as candles away from walls or curtains.
- Place a working smoke detector on every floor, and check the batteries monthly.
- Place an approved fire extinguisher on every floor.
- Keep emergency numbers (police, fire department, and doctor) near all telephones.
- Disconnect appliances that are no longer in use.
- Check the electrical system of the house regularly, particularly if it is an older house.
- Check the chimney regularly.
- Always point pot handles away from the edge of the stove and other burners.
- Keep potholders next to stove.
- Avoid using portable heater when sleeping at night.
- Do not use gasoline to ignite outdoor barbeque stove, use lighter fluid.
- If a fire does break out, crawl to the nearest exit to escape.
- Be familiar with the locations of all the fire exits.

### 3. How to decrease the risk of car accidents in the elderly?

- Check vision regularly.
- Have hearing and/or hearing aids checked regularly.

When crossing the street:

- Don't stop or return to the curb if the "Don't Walk" sign begins to flash while crossing the intersection. Continue to walk quickly to the other side of the street.
- It is best to have someone accompany you.
- Even if the light is green, you should look left-right-left before you cross. Look especially to your left because cars are coming from your left.
- Before crossing the street, be sure that the cars have stopped, and the drivers can see you.
- Cross the street at the intersection, not in the middle of a block or road.
- Do not step in front of a non-moving bus, because drivers may not clearly see pedestrians at the front of the vehicle.
- Walk in front of parked cars and not at the back of them.

If you drive:

- Attend driving school for older motorists.
- Wear a shoulder and lap safety belts at all times when traveling in a vehicle.
- Keep the car in safe, good condition.
- Do not drive when fatigued or after taking medication that might affect driving abilities.
- Stay current with the "rules of the road" and driver safety education.
- Obtain information about alternative transportation available in the community, in the event that you cannot drive.

Other safety precautions:

- Be aware of engine sound from parked cars, and back up lights from moving vehicles, drivers may not see pedestrians too close to them.
- Wear light color clothing at night, attach high-visibility fluorescent material to a purse or briefcase.

We hope that you have learned some safety tips from the above list to help you prevent injuries and accidents.