Fall Prevention

As we get closer to winter, let's talk a little bit about fall prevention. Winter months mean ice and snow, which mean slippery walking surfaces. When going outside, take your time. Extend your arms and bend your knees. Shuffle your feet, take short steps, and point your feet out slightly. If possible, let someone know when you're going out and when to expect you back.

Continue to exercise during the winter months, as muscle atrophy or weakness predisposes you to falls. Simple stretches (arms, legs, and torso), marching in place while sitting and/or standing, dance steps in place, and "practice" rising out of a chair without using your hands 10-15 times in a row every day can help keep your muscles strong to prevent falls.

When in your home, avoid using throw rugs on your floor. Keep the area, including stairs, free of clutter and cords. Take smaller loads when going up and down stairs so that you have a free hand for the railing. For those with washers in the basement, this may mean using bags to carry laundry up and down rather than a large laundry basket. Move items down onto lower shelves. Take your time when answering the phone or doorbell. Rushing can lead to falls and then you still won't get to them! Wear properly fitting, non-skid shoes. This means no open backed slippers.

Use a night light. When shutting off lights for the night, be sure a light is on in your bedroom so you can see to walk. Then use a lamp to see to your bed. Do not rely on memory to get you there.

Finally, if you have issues with low blood pressure, dizziness, or feeling foggy, talk to your health care provider to see if you need a medication change or if you should change the time of day you take your medications. If you have fallen, tell your health care provider, even if it did not result in injury. They may want to run further tests or make other changes.

For more information, check out the following website:
[Materials for Your Older Patients | STEADI - Older Adult Fall Prevention | CDC Injury Center](#)