HEAD AND SPINE INJURY PREVENTION

Preventing Falls in the Home!!

Christine Applegate, BSN, RN, CRRN
NEUROSURGERY NURSE NAVIGATOR
FALLS ARE THE LEADING CAUSE OF INJURY TO OLDER PEOPLE

Fall Prevention starts in the home!!
FALLS ARE NORMALLY A SIGN THAT SOMETHING IS WRONG

- Increasing weakness resulting in falls can be a sign of:
  - UTI
  - ILLNESS
  - STROKE
  - HEART ATTACK
  - LOW BLOOD PRESSURE
  - DEHYDRATION
RISK FACTORS FOR FALLS

❖ REACTIONS TO CERTAIN MEDICATIONS.
❖ POOR BALANCE OR WEAK MUSCLES.
❖ TAKING SEVERAL DIFFERENT TYPES OF MEDICATIONS.
❖ HAVING DEMENTIA OR MEMORY PROBLEMS.
❖ HAVING BOWEL OR BLADDER FREQUENCY OR URGENCY.
❖ HAVING VISION AND/OR HEARING PROBLEMS
❖ DRINKING TOO MUCH ALCOHOL.
❖ PROBLEMS WITH FEET INCLUDING; LOSS OF FEELING, ULCERS, CORNS, AND CALLUSES.
PREVENTING FALLS IN THE HOME

❖ REMOVE CLUTTER ESPECIALLY ON STAIRCASES.
❖ MAKE SURE CARPETS ARE NOT FRAYED OR LOOSE.
❖ MAKE SURE AREA CARPETS DO NOT SLIDE ON HARD FLOORS.
❖ WEAR NON-SKID FOOTWEAR WHEN IN THE HOUSE.
❖ WEAR PROPER FITTING FOOTWEAR.
❖ LIMIT ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION.
❖ USE NONSLIP MATS ON BATHROOM FLOORS AND IN SHOWERS AND BATHTUBS.
❖ USE NIGHT LIGHTS AND BEDSIDE LAMPS TO ENSURE ADEQUATE LIGHTING FOR NIGHT TIME BATHROOM TRIPS.
HEALTH PREVENTION

❖ SEE YOUR DOCTOR REGULARLY.
❖ REVIEW EACH PRESCRIPTION EVERYTIME YOU GET NEW MEDICATION.
❖ REPORT ANY MUSCLE WEAKNESS, DIZZINESS, OR NUMBNESS TO YOUR DOCTOR.
❖ TALK TO YOUR DOCTOR ABOUT GENTLE EXERCISE PROGRAMS FOR YOU.
❖ USE ALL ASSISTIVE DEVICES THAT HAVE BEEN PRESCRIBED TO YOU.
❖ ASK YOUR DOCTOR FOR REFERRAL TO PHYSICAL OR OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY AS NEEDED.
❖ REPORT ANY CHANGES IN YOUR HEALTH TO YOUR DOCTOR.
WHAT DO YOU DO IF YOU FALL?

❖ IF YOU FALL AND ARE EXPERIENCING PAIN SEEK MEDICAL TREATMENT.

❖ IF YOU FALL, HIT YOUR HEAD, AND ARE TAKING BLOOD THINNERS, SEEK MEDICAL TREATMENT IMMEDIATELY.

❖ IF YOU LIVE ALONE, GET INFORMATION ON HOME MONITORING EQUIPMENT SO THAT YOU CAN CALL FOR HELP IN THE EVENT OF A FALL.

❖ ALWAYS REPORT ALL FALLS TO YOUR DOCTOR.