

# Reducing Falls In Seniors

## Seattle YMCA

### Milton Curtis, MD

Senior Fall Prevention Initiative®

[www.SeniorSafetyScore.org](http://www.SeniorSafetyScore.org)



® (SFPI), 501 (c)(3)

## Objectives

- Receive basic information and statistics about the scope and impact of older adult falls
- Learn how the Senior Safety Falls Initiative<sup>®</sup> innovative program addresses the issue of falls
- Learn about practical steps you and/or a loved one can take to help live safer, healthier lives
- Encourage you to get your Senior Safety Score<sup>®</sup> and take at least one action to decrease your risk of falls

# Senior Falls Are a Major Public Health Problem

Level of Care	Percent	Total Number	Costs
Population 65 and over	100%	52.6 M <sup>1</sup>	\$50 B in 2015 \$102 B by 2030
Falls per year	30%	15.8 M	
ER visits <sup>2</sup>	5.7%	3.0 M	
Hospitalizations	2.4%	1.3 M	\$30 K/hospitalization
Deaths		25.2 K <sup>3</sup> 70/day <sup>3</sup>	

CDC website - <https://www.cdc.gov/homeandrecreationalafety/falls/adultfalls.html> June 6, 2019

1. Senior population age 65 and over 2019: 16% of 329 M total US population.

2. ED visits don't include those seen by Fire Dept and not transported or to those seen by Primary Care Provider.

3. For comparison, deaths from opioids 70.2 K in 2017, 192/day.

# Washington State Department of Health

- **28%** of Washington residents over age 65 **fall** annually.
- In 2018 there were **20,994 hospitalizations** for falls among adults age 65+.
- Fall-related injuries account for more than **half of all injury-related deaths of adults aged 65+**, and 70% of all injury-related deaths for adults aged 85+.
- In 2018, Washington State had the 5th highest rate of self-reported falls and the **16th-highest rate of fall-related deaths** in the nation for adults age 65+.

## My Story

- Family Practice Doctor for 35 years
- Saw what worked and what didn't work
- Witnessed other's stories and impacts of falls on older adults' lives
- Recognized importance of fall screening
- Important to move beyond screening and testing to recommendations
- Personal experience:
  - My father-sustained hip fracture, surgery, recovery, and then passed 2 months later
  - My hip fracture at age 65
- Developed Senior Safety Score<sup>®</sup> - combining years of experience

## Get Your Personalized Senior Safety Score®

- Online at [www.SeniorSafetyScore.org](http://www.SeniorSafetyScore.org)
- Survey can be done by an older adult, family, caregiver, or loved one.
- It is simple: Yes / No / Not Sure choices
- It is quick: takes about 5 to 10 minutes
- Your personalized **Senior Safety Score**® and recommendations are sent as soon as you finish the survey.
- The results can be printed out.
- Website is secure: no information is shared

# Senior Safety Questionnaire: Example

## Senior Safety Assessment & Guide

### Falls

One out of every 3 patients over age 65 falls, less than half report it. Falling is the primary cause of hip fractures and head injuries which can be serious and potentially lead to complications including incapacity. That is why it is important to ask the question at least once a year as recommended by Medicare.

**Have you fallen 2 or more times OR once with an injury in the last year?**

No

Yes

# Questions One and Two

## **Question 1-Falls**

*Have you fallen 2 or more times OR once with an injury in the last year?*

## **Question 2-Medical Conditions**

*Do you have any of the following medical conditions?*

- *Neurologic (Parkinsonism, MS, strokes, neuropathy, dementia)*
- *Dizziness and balance (Vision, inner ear, hypoglycemia)*
- *Sudden falls without warning (seizures, fainting, TIAs, heart arrhythmias)*
- *Musculoskeletal (Kyphosis, arthritis, amputations)*
- *Urinary (incontinence, frequency)*



# Questions Three and Four

## QUESTION 3 - MEMORY

*Do you have significant memory problems?*

## QUESTION 4 – MEDICINES

*Do you have any of the medicines in the high-risk group?*

- *Some opioid pain meds*
- *Older antidepressants. These can be hard to recognize since they are used for chronic pain and insomnia in low doses.*
- *Most anti-anxiety meds*
- *Some sleeping pills*
- *Older Blood Pressure meds*
- *Meds to maintain heart rhythm*
- *Some diabetes meds to lower glucose.*
- *Most meds for bowel spasm*
- *Older antihistamines for allergies*
- *Older anti-Parkinson meds*
- *Some anti-muscle spasm meds*

## Questions Five, Six, and Seven

### QUESTION 5 – BONE DENSITY

*Have you had a bone density screening test for osteoporosis within the last 2 years?*

### QUESTION 6 – ENTRY STAIRS

*How many steps does it take to get into your house?*

### QUESTION 7 – STORIES IN YOUR HOME

*How many stories are in your home?*



## Questions Eight and Nine

### QUESTION 8 – LAUNDRY LOCATION

*Where is the laundry located?*

### QUESTION 9 – BATHROOM LAYOUT

*Is the bathroom small or does it have narrow doors which make it difficult to get a walker or wheelchair into the bathroom and have adequate room to move around?*



## Questions Ten and Eleven

### QUESTION 10

*Do you need to step over the edge of the bathtub to bathe?*

### QUESTION 11 – BURNER TYPE

*Are there old-style coil burners that turn bright red?*



## Question Twelve

### QUESTION 12 – LIVING AREA

*Which picture matches your living area in home?*



## Question Thirteen, Fourteen, and Fifteen

### **QUESTION 13 – WALKING ASSISTING DEVICES**

*Do you use a cane, walker or wheelchair?*



### **QUESTION 14 - DRIVING**

*Have you chosen to limit driving?*

### **QUESTION 15 – FENDER BENDERS IN LAST YEAR**

*Is there any report or evidence of 'fender benders' in the last 1 year?*

## Questions Sixteen, Seventeen, and Eighteen

### Question 16-Pets

*Are there small pets who can get underfoot?*

### Question 17-Nighttime Bathroom Trips

*Do you EVER get up during the night to use the bathroom without turning on the lights?*

### Question 18-Alcohol Use

*How many alcoholic drinks do you consume every day?*



# What Do You Do With Your Results and Recommendations?

- **For risks in the Medical area**
  - Print out your SSQ.
  - Make an appointment with your Primary Care Provider to discuss safety and fall prevention
- **For risks related to the home environment**
  - Review “Fall Prevention Projects for \$100 or Less”
  - Review “Fall Prevention Projects in 2 Hours or Less”
  - Review “Prioritized Home Improvement Projects”
- **For all risks**
  - Review the recommendations on your individual report



# Fall Prevention Projects for \$100 or Less

## IMPROVE LIGHTING IN KEY AREAS

- Brighter lights for the entry, bathroom and stairways. LED lights are bright and save money over the long term. Local hardware store. 100-watt Halogen Bulbs 16 bulbs for \$17.00. **100-watt LED 4 bulbs for \$12.**
- Night light or motion-activated light for the bedroom. Local hardware store. Automatic Dusk to Dawn LED Night Light 4 pack for \$7. LED Night Light with Motion Sensor \$9. **Indoor Motion-Sensing Light Control \$13 to \$17.**

# Fall Prevention Projects for \$100 or Less

## IMPROVE BATHROOM SAFETY

- A hand-held shower. Local hardware store. Chrome **Hand-Held Showerhead \$36**. These are available at many places and are sometimes on sale.
- A shower chair in the bathtub or shower. Chair with back \$40 - \$50. **Bench only \$23 - \$39**.
- Skid resistant strips in the bathtub or shower. Local hardware store. **18-inch Tub Treads 6 strips \$5**
- **Raised toilet seat**. Local hardware store. **\$18 - \$32**.
- Toilet safety frame. McKesson makes a good one for \$22

# Fall Prevention Projects Under \$100

## IMPROVE HANDHOLDS

- Grab bars for the bathroom especially near the toilet and the tub. Screw on permanent grab bars are much safer than the suction ones. Local hardware store. 24-inch Chrome Bath Grip \$17 to \$19. 24-inch ADA Compliant Grab Bar \$24. 18-inch Grab Bar \$20. 12-inch Chrome Bath Safety Grab Bar \$15 to \$16. **Three grab bars of varying lengths may cost about \$70 to \$80.**
- Handrails for both sides of any stairs. Local hardware store. Unfinished Hemlock Stair Handrail 10 feet for \$50. Brushed Nickel Stair-Rail Wall Bracket 6 for 10 feet of rail \$36. **Total about \$90.**

# Fall Prevention Projects in 2 Hours or Less

## IMPROVE LIGHTING IN KEY AREAS

- Replace any burned out lights. (15 minutes)
- Replace low watt bulbs with **brighter lights** especially for the entry, bathroom and stairways. (1 to 2 hours)
- Put in a night light or **motion-activated light** in the bedroom. (15 minutes)

# Fall Prevention Projects in 2 Hours or Less

## IMPROVE BATHROOM SAFETY

- Install **grab bars** near the toilet and the bathtub or shower. Screw on permanent grab bars are much safer than the suction ones. (1 to 2 hours)
- Replace the old overhead shower with a **hand-held shower**. (30 to 45 minutes)
- Apply **skid resistant strips** in the bathtub or shower. (30 to 45 minutes)
- Replace the standard toilet seat with a **high-rise seat**. (30 minutes)
- Move items such as small cabinets, stand up items or stacked items out of the bathroom to give more room if the bathroom is small. (30 minutes to 2 hours to include some time to figure out what to do with the items that got moved)
- Remove glass shelves or anything with **sharp corners**. (30 to 60 minutes not including repairing any holes that need to be patched and painted.)

# Fall Prevention Projects in 2 Hours or Less

## MAKE PATHS CLEAR IN THE HOUSE

- Remove loose rugs. (30 minutes)
- Walk through the house and pretend like the power went out.
  - How clear are the paths from the living room to the kitchen and from the living area to the bathroom and the bedroom?
  - Can you get from room to room without stumbling on something? (Time depends on size and condition of the house.)

# Fall Prevention Projects in 2 Hours or Less

## IMPROVE HANDHOLDS

- Install **grab bars** in the bathroom as needed and near stairs and beds as needed. **(1 to 2 hours)**
- Install a second **handrail on stairways**, so there is one on each side. **(About 2- hours with 2 people)**

# Fall Prevention Projects in 2 Hours or Less

## MAKE YOUR KITCHEN SAFER

- **Arrange kitchen** so that frequently used items are within easy reach. **(2 hours)**
- Avoid frequent bending to the floor. Use a grabber/reacher to pick things up from floor.
- Rearrange your kitchen so you don't need to reach high things. NEVER stand on a chair or stool to get high items.
- Modify your kitchen work habits such as slide heavy pots along the counter instead of carrying them.
- Have someone **redistribute large/heavy items** such as having flour and sugar into smaller containers. **(1 – 2 hours)**
- Buy milk in smaller sizes.
- Remove glass shelves or anything with sharp corners. (30 to 60 minutes not including repairing any holes that need to be patched and painted.



# Topics Discussed on Website

## General Information

- Medical Issues video (10 min)
- Beers List
- Fall statistics
- Osteoporosis
- Behavior change in Dementia

## Stairs and Ladders

- Home entry video and article
- Indoor stairs video
- Safe ladder use

## Bathroom safety

- 3 videos

## Trip hazards

- Downsizing

## Action Steps

- Moving from Knowledge to Action (7- part series based on National Coalition On Aging) recommendations and behavioral change.
- Exercise programs
- Home Projects:
  - In 2 hours or less
  - For \$100 or less
  - Prioritized list

# Summary

- There is no “low-risk” senior for falls risk if 30% of us over age 65 fall each year.
- The Senior Safety Score<sup>®</sup> is an easy to use assessment tool to identify your individual risk factors.
- You immediately receive specific recommendations to decrease your risk of falls and help maintain your independence.
- **You can get your Senior Safety Score<sup>®</sup> today and with some simple steps be safer within a week!**

# Questions???

*Thank You*

Website: [www.seniorsafetyscore.org](http://www.seniorsafetyscore.org)

Email: [mcurtismd@seniorsafetyscore.org](mailto:mcurtismd@seniorsafetyscore.org)

