

## **Staying on Your Feet: Tips on Preventing Falls**

Have you taken a tumble lately? Each year, more than one-third of adults 65 years and older get hurt in a fall. A fall can lead to a serious injury, such as breaking a hip. A broken bone can make it hard for you to get around. In time, you may not be able to live alone. Keep these facts in mind:

### **Falls are most harmful if you:**

- are older than 80 years
- have osteoporosis
- have had changes in your balance or the way you walk
- have a change in the way you see or how you sense what is around you
- are taking certain medicines

### **How can you prevent falls?**

1. First, talk with your health care provider about these issues:
  - Do you have osteoporosis (brittle bones)?
  - What medicines are you taking? Could they add to your chance of a fall?
  - When was the last time you had your eyes checked? Changes in how you see can add to the chance of a fall.
2. Make your home safer:
  - Watch for slippery or wet surfaces.
  - Get rid of things you can trip over, like shoes, books or clothing left in the middle of the floor.
  - Get rid of small throw rugs or use double-sided tape to keep the rugs from slipping.
  - Use handrails when you go up and down stairs.
  - Put items you use a lot in places you can easily reach. Using stepstools can be dangerous.
  - Think about putting grab bars next to the toilet or in the shower.
  - Wear sensible shoes with low heels and non-skid soles. Shoes that tie are a better choice than slip-on shoes.
  - Use your cane or walker if you need them.
3. Keep moving:
  - Regular exercise is the best gift you can give yourself.
  - Do balance, flexibility and muscle building exercises.
  - Tai Chi is a great choice of exercise to make your balance better.
4. Make sure you get plenty of calcium and vitamin D. Vitamin D helps the body use calcium. It is always best to get your calcium through foods. Dairy products, broccoli, collard greens or bok choy have a lot of calcium. If you can't get enough calcium through foods, be sure to take a supplement.

For fall prevention information, call Celeste Smith, RN at 718-794-6062.