







# SAFETY AND FALL PREVENTION

## What we Know

Falls are the cause of **40% of hospitalizations** of adults 65 and older. It is the **leading cause of injury** for this age group, because our risk for falls grows as we age. Our bodies change as we age, but our surroundings may not. This can make falling possible. Most aging adults want to age in their own homes for as long as possible. A home assessment can lower the risk for falls and delay the need for a skilled nursing facility.

## General at Home Safety Tips

-  Always carry your phone or wear a lifeline button in case you experience a fall
-  Drink plenty of water and avoid alcohol to stay hydrated
-  Eat multiple times a day to prevent low blood sugar
-  Take medications as written on prescription bottle
-  Get regular checkups with your doctor to go over medications and other health concerns.
-  Have daily/weekly phone calls with loved ones – set a regular time to call.

## Common Trip/Fall Hazards and Tips to Prevent Them

### Trip/ Fall Hazards

1. Cords
2. Rugs
3. Clutter
4. Stairs
5. Poor lighting
6. Low toilets, chairs, other furniture that are hard to get up from.
7. Reaching for objects on high or low shelves.
8. Slippery flooring
9. Slippers or shoes without backs

### Tips

1. Bundle or remove cords from walkways.
2. Remove rugs or use rugs with non-slip backing.
3. Keep pathways and walkways clutter-free.
4. Add handrail and non-slip flooring to stairs.  
A ramp/stairlift can be used in place of stairs.
5. Add nightlights in bathroom/hallways.
6. Get taller furniture, a riser for your toilet, and install grab bars.
7. Place commonly used objects on shelves between hip and shoulder height for ease of reach.
8. Place non-slip mats in the tub or shower and wear shoes around the house.
9. Wear shoes with sturdy soles that go around the entire foot.

# Local Resources

## **Aging and Disabilities Resource Center (ADRC) – Vernon County – (608) 637-5201**

- This agency wants to help you age in your home as long as possible and assist you with goals you have set for yourself.
- They can get in contact with other resources that can help you modify your home, provide education to prevent falls, exercises to maintain strength and endurance, counseling, transportation, caregiver training, and much more.

## **Home Safety Innovations (HSI) – (920) 379-4439**

- Home modification/safety assessments
  - Some insurances will cover the cost
  - If you go through your local ADRC (see above) and have them refer you, it may be free of charge.
  - \$100 cost out of pocket
- Install some home modifications such as grab bars, railing, stairlifts, and ramps
- Ramp rental
- Bathroom remodeling to fit your needs.

## **Independent Living Resources – (608) 787-1111**

- Home modification/safety assessments
- Offer community resources to help people continue to live independently, public education and training, and mental health services.
- Allow you to borrow/trial adaptive equipment for free
- Provide walkers, wheelchairs, commodes, shower chairs, transfer benches at no charge due to grant funding and donations.

## **La Crosse County Falls Prevention Coalition – (608) 785-5700**

- If you visit their website (<http://www.lacrossestopfalls.org/>) or call, you will find information on fall prevention, upcoming events, classes that can build strength and balance to prevent falls, a form to assess your risk of falling, and other resources.

## **Gundersen Health System – (608) 775-3054**

- Offers a Stepping On: Falls Prevention workshop designed to educate on building balance, medication effects on falling, community and home safety, proper footwear.
- The workshop meets 2 hours each week for 7 weeks.
- Call the above number to register.

# Safely Getting up from Fall – No Immediate need for 911

## STEP 1

### Assess, Modify, Plan

- ASSESS what hurts
- MODIFY movements accordingly
- PLAN where you want to go



## STEP 2

### Roll Slowly onto Side



## STEP 3

### Push UP onto Hands and Knees



## STEP 4

Crawl to a sturdy object, place your strongest foot forward, and get to one knee while using furniture to steady yourself.



## STEP 5

Slowly rise onto feet, turn, then sit down.



## STEP 6

Call someone to let them know you have fallen and get checked out by a medical professional.

