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**GO BEARS!!!**

**What you should know:**

- ◆ September 22, 2013 is Falls Prevention Awareness Day!
- ◆ Falls are the leading cause of injuries for seniors!
- Exercise can improve your balance and muscle tone, which will help prevent falls.
- Keep pathways clear to prevent falls at home.

**Call Apex for a FREE evaluation:**  
**1-855-594-7050**

## Falls Prevention Awareness

Illinois is one of 47 states and the national Falls Free<sup>®</sup> Initiative that are declaring a statewide **Falls Prevention Awareness Day** on the first day of fall, September 22, 2013.

This year's theme, *Preventing Falls—One Step at a Time*, seeks to unite professionals, older adults, caregivers, and family members to play a part in raising awareness and preventing falls in the older adult population.

Every 15 seconds, an older adult is seen in an Emergency Department for a fall-related injury. Falls are the leading cause of both fatal and non-fatal injuries for those aged 65 and over. The chances of falling and of being seriously injured in a fall increase with age.

"Falls are not a normal part of aging, and this day of awareness provides an opportunity to educate older adults and the community at large about how to reduce falls risks," said (Bonita) Lynn Beattie, vice president of Injury Prevention with the National Council on Aging (NCOA), leader of the Falls Free<sup>®</sup> Initiative. "We encourage seniors and their families to take proactive steps to prevent falls and stay independent for as long as possible."

### Autumn Apple Snack Cake

**Ingredients:**

- |                                    |                                     |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 3/4 cup Egg Beaters egg substitute | 3/4 cup whole wheat flour           |
| 1 teaspoon vanilla                 | 1 teaspoon baking powder            |
| 1 cup Splenda brown sugar blend    | 1/2 teaspoon salt                   |
| 1 teaspoon cinnamon                | 2 apples, peeled and finely chopped |
| 1/2-1 cup walnuts                  |                                     |

**Directions**

- Preheat oven to 350°F and grease 8-inch square pan.
- In large mixing bowl, beat egg beaters and vanilla until frothy; gradually add Splenda brown sugar, continuing to beat after each addition.
- Add cinnamon, baking powder and salt; gradually add flour continuing to beat after each addition.
- Stir in apples and nuts. Pour into greased pan.
- Bake 30 to 45 minutes or until toothpick inserted in center comes out clean.
- Serve warm or cool. Can be topped with whipped cream.



## Falls Are A Serious Problem For Seniors

Pratfalls on TV may be humorous, however, falls among the senior population are no joking matter! Hip fractures and head traumas are the leading cause of injury death among people age 65 and older. Falls can be serious at any age, often causing sprains or injury to bones and soft tissue. Along with the inevitable decrease in overall physical activity that occurs after a fall, seniors can also lose valuable muscle mass, endurance and functional range of motion. Thus falls can be disastrous for the senior population, possibly leading to long-term immobility and loss of independence.

Many factors associated with an increased risk of falls (including lack of strength and balance, improper footwear, hazards in the home and vision disturbances) are considered preventable. To help prevent falls, the American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons ([www.aaos.org](http://www.aaos.org)) recommends that seniors participate in a fall prevention program designed to improve strength, balance, agility and coordination.

It is easy for anyone to trip over a throw rug, a pet, something left laying on the floor or a curb when they are not paying close attention to their surroundings. The amount of damage caused by a fall can depend on the person's muscle mass, as well as the type of fall and the impact. Muscle mass can act as a cushion to take some of the impact during a fall. Since a decline in muscle mass often accompanies aging, older adults typically have less muscle tissue surrounding their joints. This is one reason that a fall prevention program is so important for this population.

A good sense of balance can help prevent a fall or reduce the severity of one that does occur. For example, a person may be able to decrease the speed at which they fall. Coordination and agility exercises taught in fall prevention programs serve to help people adjust more readily to changes in surfaces or unexpected obstacles in their path. Tai Chi exercise programs have become popular in helping seniors maintain their balance and flexibility to prevent falls.

### Contact Apex Home Health Care for some Helpful Tips for Fall Prevention

1. Try a tai chi class, chair exercise program or take up walking for exercise. Overall, the most important thing is to just keep moving!
2. Remove clutter from hallways, staircases and other areas of heavy traffic in the home.
3. Discuss any dizziness or vision changes (especially after a change in medication) with a physician.
4. Get regular eye examinations.
5. Use proper technique when lifting heavy objects.
6. Wear flat, rubber-soled, non-slip shoes.
7. Ask a doctor, pharmacist, or your home health nurse to review all medications (including prescriptions, over-the-counter medicines, vitamins and minerals) and highlight any precautions needed to prevent falls due to medication side effects. Many medications have side effects that can affect an older adult's coordination and balance or cause dizziness, confusion or sleepiness.

## Call Apex Home Health Care anytime at 1-855-594-7050

Apex offers Skilled Nursing, Therapy, Social Worker, Dietitian and Caregiver services.

Apex offers Disease Management for Diabetes, Hypertension, Stroke, COPD, Cancer, Ostomy, Post-op, Wound care and many other conditions.



Please call us if you have:

- Any change in medication(s)
- Sudden weight loss or gain
- Been recently hospitalized due to fall, injury or ailment
- Change in condition, pain, or are unable to perform daily activities

## Home Modification To Prevent Falls Among the Elderly

**By: Mary Jane Gonzalez, RPT, Apex Home Health Care, Inc.**

Home modification involves adapting a home for a person with or without disabilities in order to perform activities of daily living as safe and comfortable as possible, to maintain a certain degree of independence.

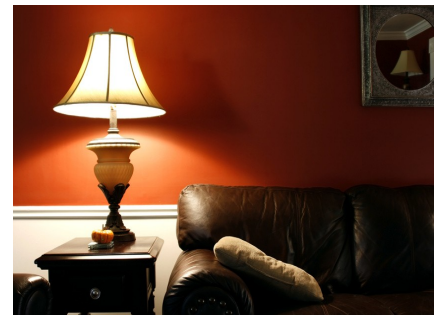
Home modification can be simple or complex. The type of modification required will depend on the nature of the individual's disabilities and the physical lay out of the home. An investment in home modification can eliminate and delay the need for institutional care.

### Improve lighting and visibility:

- ◆ Place light switches close to room entrances, install light switches at the top and bottom of stairs and install lighted switch plates
- ◆ Use high-watt light bulbs in stairways and other hazardous areas. Provide sufficient even lighting throughout the home and install lighting if necessary.
- ◆ The Kitchen is a common area where fall occurs. It is best to install under- the-cabinet lights to help with visibility and storing frequently used kitchen items in lower cabinets for easy accessibility.
- ◆ Install nightlights in the path between the bedroom and bathroom.
- ◆ Install cordless battery-operated lights inside closets and cabinets.
- ◆ Install motion-sensitive exterior lighting for walking outside at night.

### To enhance safety and support:

- ◆ Remove loose rugs or rugs that do not have non-skid backing. If rugs are used, secure them with non-skid backing or a double-sided carpet tape.
- ◆ Telephone, electrical cords and wiring should be secured using wire covers.
- ◆ Use non-skid mats or adhesive strips in bathtubs.
- ◆ A shower chair or tub bench would help facilitate safe transfers and bathing.
- ◆ Install a suction grab bar, a handrail or a clamp tub bar to prevent falls in the bathtub/shower.
- ◆ Rearrange furniture to move it out of paths and walkways.
- ◆ Place barriers at dangerous locations, such as a baby gate at a stairwell.
- ◆ Install plug-in carbon monoxide detectors and smoke detectors near kitchens and bedroom.
- ◆ Obtain an Emergency Response System or Medical Life Alert System when help is needed after a fall. There are programs sponsored by the state that could help seniors obtain this service.
- ◆ Consult your physician or home health professional for safety evaluations at home.



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*Your Collaborative Home Health Provider in Reducing Preventable Hospitalization*

## APEX Spotlights



Jazmin Duran, Patient Care Coordinator, has been with Apex Home Health Care for 6 years. She is bilingual and fluent in Spanish. Her favorite part of her job is conversing with patients on the phone and helping them meet their healthcare needs. Jazmin has a background as a Pharmacy Tech, and went to Morton College to study medical office work. She is known for her cheerful personality and exceptional customer service standards. She serves as an excellent resource for our referral sources, physicians, vendors and her co-workers. Jazmin enjoys spending time participating in outdoor activities with her children in her free time.



**Apex is in partnership with Fall Prevention Clinics of America to address the issue of falls in the geriatric population.** Fall Prevention Clinics of America, in Naperville, is dedicated to the diagnosis and treatment of falls, dizziness and balance disorders for people of all ages. Their three phase FALL RISKS ASSESSMENT combined with a unique Balance Correction Training™ program provides an 87% patient success rate at improving balance capability and relieving the effects of vertigo among all age groups. Since 2003, Fall Prevention Clinics of America is a referral resource to physicians, nurses, social workers, case managers, physical and occupational therapists. They also provide educational and consultative seminars to clinical and non-clinical staff at hospitals, nursing homes, assisted and independent senior living communities and home health agencies.