

# Preventing Falls



- \* Persons with developmental disabilities may be at increased risk for falls due to things such as cerebral palsy, osteoporosis, epilepsy and some medications.
- \* Once you have fallen, a fracture may be the result. There are some very easy and practical things that you can do to prevent falls and the possibility of fractures.

## Four Things You Can Do

# 1. Start Exercising



- ▶ Talk to your doctor before starting a new exercise program and find out what is the best exercise for you.
- ▶ Exercise increases your strength. You want exercises that are designed to improve your balance and coordination. You may need a therapy program for strength training depending on your unique needs.
- ▶ People who exercise are stronger and less likely to fall.

## 2. Do a Home Safety Check

- ▶ Clean up items that you might trip over from stairs and places where you walk
- ▶ Get rid of throw rugs or put non-slip tape on the backs to keep them in place
- ▶ Make sure that the things you use regularly are stored where you can reach them without a step stool
- ▶ If you are unsteady, have grab bars installed next to the toilet and in the tub or shower
- ▶ Use rubber backed mats on the bathroom floor and rubber mats in the shower or tub
- ▶ Check your home to be sure it is well lighted. Especially check stairways for good lighting.



- ▶ If you do not have a handrail on the stairs, get one installed on both sides of the stairs
- ▶ If you use adaptive equipment such as a wheelchair, shower chair, braces, lifts or a walker have it checked regularly for safety. Always be sure to use the brakes before transfers.
- ▶ Wear shoes that are well fitting and have non-skid soles. The proper footwear can be the difference in whether or not you fall.

### 3. Have your doctor or health care provider check your medicines



- ▶ Some medicine can cause a person to get sleepy, dizzy or unsteady. The combination of medicines you take could also lead to a feeling of unsteadiness.
- ▶ Reactions to medications may be different for different people especially if you have diagnoses for more than one condition. Do not forget to tell your doctor about any medicine that you take that does not need a prescription such as cold or allergy pills.
- ▶ A pharmacist is another good source to check about the combination of medication that you take.
- ▶ After the review, your doctor may decide on some changes so that you feel better and are less likely to fall.

## 4. Have Your Vision Checked



- ▶ This is an easy thing to do just to be sure that you have glasses if you need them or that your glasses get changed as often as your vision changes.
- ▶ If you are seeing well, there is less chance that you will fall.



**Remember: Prevention  
is the #1 Priority!**