



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Falls Are More Prevalent in Older Adults; But Can be Reduced By Taking Simple Steps Making Their Home Safe to Live

(Malden, MA)— One in four Americans aged 65+ falls each year, according to the National Council on Aging. Every 11 seconds, an older adult is treated in the emergency room for a fall; every 19 minutes, an older adult dies from a fall. Falls are the leading cause of fatal injury and the most common cause of nonfatal trauma-related hospital and nursing home admissions among older adults.

Although falls are prevalent in older adults, there could be many ways to help your loved one continue to live safely in their own home.

Falls and accidents seldom “just happen.” Usually there are at least several contributing factors that lead to a fall. The danger in some of these factors can be eliminated or reduced by taking simple steps recommended by Mystic Valley Elder Services to make an elder's home safer. Here is a room-by-room breakdown of some of these steps.

Bathrooms: Place a rubber mat or rubber safety strips in the tub or shower. Install sturdy grab bars in the tub/shower area to provide support. Have a night light available to use after dark and in the middle of the night.

Bedrooms: Use night lights or bedside, remote-controlled light switches. Place the telephone in an area easy to get to and keep the cord out of walking pathways. Consider a cordless telephone.

Stairs and hallways: Put light switches conveniently at both the top and bottom of stairs. Make sure carpeting is not loose or buckling and use non-skid treads on stairs. Both sides of each stairway should have sturdy handrails running their entire lengths. Avoid waxing hardwood floors that could create a slippery surface.

Living areas: Secure and place electrical/telephone cords out of walking pathways. Remove throw rugs that might slide or attach non-skid strips to rug backings. Furniture should be arranged to allow for unobstructed walkways. It is important to keep floors clear of clutter.

Other tips to prevent falls:

- You should also be aware of clothing and behavior that can help create a safer environment. You should wear well-fitted, flat, rubber-soled shoes to prevent slipping.
- Do not walk or climb stairs with arms loaded—always leave a hand free for balance.
- Slowly get out of bed and slowly rise from sitting to avoid dizziness.
- Make sure to have your vision tested regularly and keeps her glasses clean.
- Be aware of any medications you are taking that could cause difficulty with balance.
- You should be discussing the falls with your primary care physician to see if there is a medical condition that needs attention.

The dangerous situation created by a fall is frequently compounded by the inability to call for help. Personal emergency response systems should be installed whenever someone appears to be at risk of falling. The systems provide 24-hour access to emergency help, giving both the elder and family members some sense of security

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Located in Malden, Mass., Mystic Valley Elder Services is a non-profit agency that provides essential home- and community-based care and resources to elders, adults living with disabilities, and caregivers who reside in Chelsea, Everett, Malden, Medford, Melrose, North Reading, Reading, Revere, Stoneham, Wakefield and Winthrop. Agency services include coordination of home care, transportation, Meals on Wheels, and information and referrals. For more information, please call (781) 324-7705 or visit www.mves.org.