

This information is forwarded by the **Love Thy Neighbor Ministry** at Saint Rose of Lima Catholic Church, Milton FL.
Source of Information: The Catholic Foundation of Northwest Florida. Due to the many references, some may not be current but have many useful reference sources. Emails are sent using the Blind Carbon Copy (BCC) method.

This quality of life series focuses primarily on senior citizens plus other supplemental information. You do not have to be a Senior to make use of this information. If you know of a Senior, a parishioner or a neighbor who could use this information you are invited to give them a copy of this email. Fellowship through improved communications is guided by the second greatest commandment. Sometimes an act of kindness can be as simple as a phone call, a visit, or receipt of an email.

Suggestion: Create a separate folder of this information for ease of future reference.

For information about our Parish, click on the following link: <http://parishesonline.com/scripts/HostedSites/Org.asp?ID=14423>

Our parish spirit is rising, is rising.

Fall Prevention

http://www.legacygifts.org/savvy_senior.jsp?WebID=GL2004-0129&D=200721

Dear Savvy Senior,

Do you have any suggestions to help keep my 78-year-old mother from falling down? She fell three times last year without serious injury, but I'm very concerned about her safety.

Worried Rita

Dear Rita,

Falls have become a growing concern for millions of elderly Americans and their families. In the United States, more than one in three people age 65 or older falls each year, often with dire consequences, and the risk rises with age. Here's what you should know.

As we age, our vision, hearing, muscle strength, coordination and reflexes change and weaken our balance. In addition some health conditions, such as diabetes, heart disease, circulation problems, and even medications, can affect equilibrium. Unfortunately, all of these factors make falls more likely. But the good news is that with a few simple steps your mother can improve her balance and reduce her risk of falling.

Fact: In 2004, more than 14,900 seniors died and more than 1.8 million were treated in emergency rooms because of falls.

Fall Prevention

Many falls are preventable (see www.stopfalls.org). Here are some simple tips that can help your mother stay on her feet and prevent a possible injury.

Drug review:

Does your mom take any medicine (or combination of medicines) that make her dizzy, sleepy or lightheaded? If so, gather up all the drugs she takes (prescriptions, over-the-counter and dietary supplements) and take them to her doctor or pharmacist for a drug review.

Exercise:

Improving balance and strength through exercise is one of the best ways to prevent falls. Exercises that can help improve balance (like tai chi, yoga, Pilates, stretching and even dancing) are the most helpful. Some simple balance exercises she can do at home include walking heel-to-toe across the room, standing on one foot for 30 seconds or longer, or get up from a chair and sit back down 10 to 20 times.

Fall proofing:

About half of all falls happen around the home. You can make your mom's living areas safer by clearing out the clutter and removing things she can trip over, including small throw rugs or use double-sided tape to keep them from sliding. In the bathroom use non-slip mats in the bathtub and on shower floors, and install grab bars next to her toilet and in the tub or shower. Put hand rails on both sides of the stairs and make sure the lighting throughout the house is good. Also organize her cabinets so things she uses most often are within easy reach without using a step stool and try to get her to wear low-heeled sensible shoes with good support and thin, non-slip soles. (Tip: See www.cdc.gov/ncipc/duip/preventadultfalls.htm for a home fall prevention checklist.)

Eye exam:

Poor vision can be another contributor to falls. Your mom may be wearing the wrong glasses or have a condition like glaucoma or cataracts that limits her vision. She should have her eyes checked by an eye doctor once a year.

Balance checkup:

Your mother may also need to be checked for a balance disorder. Poor balance can be caused by a variety of conditions such as inner ear problems, allergies, heart problems, head injury, or problems with blood circulation. Her doctor may recommend she see an ear, nose and throat specialist (otolaryngologist) for evaluation.

Bone up:

Strong bones can be a lifesaver if you fall. Make sure your mom is tested regularly for osteoporosis and gets plenty of calcium (1,200 mg daily), vitamin D (600 IU daily) and necessary medication to maintain healthy bones.

Savvy Tips: Depending on your mom's balance, she may need to use a cane or walker for assistance. And for peace of mind (if she lives alone), consider getting her a personal emergency response system (see www.seniorcitizens.com/k/eprs.html) which is a small transmitter "help button" that your mom carries or wears that will allow her to call for help 24 hours a day, if needed. Or better yet, check out the new high tech home monitoring systems (www.quietcare.com, www.health-watch.com, www.grandcare.com) that operate around the clock automatically letting you know when help is needed.