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FALLS ARE A NORMAL PART OF AGING: TRUE OR FALSE?

Can falls be prevented in assisted living communities? It is estimated that up to 50% of assisted living residents experience one or more falls annually. Between 10-25% of these falls require medical attention due to fractures, injuries and head trauma. According to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC), an older adult dies from a fall every 20 minutes in the United States.

A common myth suggests that these falls are simply a normal part of aging. The [fact](#) is that they are not. Most falls can be prevented. Using specific techniques designed to reduce the risk of resident falls within your communities, you have the power to ward off resident falls before they happen.

Are you doing enough? Through increased education and knowledge you can be a vital asset when it comes to resident safety and fall reduction. Determining which residents are most at risk by conducting detailed fall assessments, evaluations and interviews is the first step. Further [keys](#) to fall prevention include administering regularly scheduled screenings, exercise classes and a fall reduction program.

We are proud to partner and be a resource to you as you help to keep your residents safe. Feel free to reach out to your Crum & Forster designated Senior Risk Consultant for a review of your efforts or to discuss any additional resources or training needs.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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What can my assisted living community do?

Prior to Admission/Acceptance of Resident

- Comprehensive medical evaluation completed by licensed physician to include any history of falls.
- Interview of resident/responsible parties that includes open discussion about hospitalizations, “near falls” and history of falls. During this time it is important to openly discuss realistic expectations and all risks associated with falls.
- Conduct comprehensive [Fall Risk Evaluation](#) and if any risk for fall identified; implement Negotiated Risk Agreement including any and all interventions.
- Decide if resident can safely be managed in your community with known risks, history and interventions available in your community.
- Provide resident/responsible parties with “[Important Facts about Falls](#),” developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Post Admission of Resident

- Referral for therapy evaluation and treatment if appropriate.
- Documented orientation of safety features of community, interventions and walk through of resident apartment to insure safe walkways, etc. (with resident and responsible parties).
- Daily encouraging of residents to attend exercise classes to maintain muscle strength, balance, flexibility, balance and stamina.
- Regular resident and family member educational sessions on fall prevention.
- Screening by physician/therapists for appropriate selection and use of any assistive device.
- Staff education of resident fall risk and any preventative steps and interventions in place to support positive outcomes.

Post Fall Steps

- Conduct a “post fall” assessment to determine root cause of fall.
- Post fall monitoring should consist of closer supervision, shift documentation, personal escorting to all meals, activities and documentation for next 72 hours.
- Schedule resident/responsible party meeting, document conversation (include feedback from physician).
- Update or add additional [interventions](#). Monitor and evaluate for effectiveness.
- Update resident’s care plan and have resident or responsible party sign. Provide copy to physician.
- Formal communication to all staff involved. Communication can be done by color sticker, falling leaf, star or other symbol on chart, door, bedroom wall or simply through daily shift meetings or 24 hour reports.
- Regular “Falls” meetings should be held. Participants should include the multiple disciplinary team and any therapist already assigned to resident. Discuss intervention effectiveness, identify any trends and determine if resident’s needs can be safely managed in your community.
- Implement (or update) Negotiated Risk Agreement.

Education

- It’s important to conduct regular education sessions for residents/responsible parties and staff.
- Partner with physician and or therapy providers to provide ongoing support, guidance and education to residents, family members and staff.
- [Educate](#) residents and family members on the importance of regular [exercise](#) and incorporate into activities. Strengthening exercises can even be done when seated.
- Utilize [free customizable](#) educational materials available to you from the CDC.



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