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INTERVENTION IDEAS FOR MANAGING FALLS

Falls by seniors in assisted living facilities, skilled nursing facilities and hospitals have become common events that can cause loss of independence, injuries, and sometimes death as a result of injury. While not all falls can be prevented, effective interventions can provide significant health benefits to residents through the avoidance of harmful falls. It is vital to evaluate each intervention's effectiveness in relation to the individual needs of each resident. As you develop the approach you will take within your community, consider some of these techniques for fall prevention and surveillance.

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Intervention Ideas for Managing Falls in Senior Communities

- Inform residents/responsible parties of their fall risks and develop a plan together.
- Keep the lines of communication open at all times with residents, responsible parties, especially after a fall takes place. Keep them up to date of root cause, investigation and involve in next steps to insure safety and show your efforts, care and concern for well being of resident.
- Recommend properly fitting, supportive footwear, such as properly fitting slip-on or Velcro fastening shoes.
- Complete physical therapy screenings for all new admissions to evaluate/treat and help with adjustment to new environment.
- Improve overhead lighting as well as night lights in bathrooms, bedrooms and hallways.
- Install grab bars or handrails throughout community walls and bathrooms including in bath and shower/tub areas.
- Prohibit bathmats and throw rugs.
- Encourage residents to joining daily exercise classes and supervised walking clubs.
- Designate a full time employee(trained by therapy) to walk with high risk residents daily.
- Suggest residents sit to bathe/shower and dress.
- Reduce glare from windows and shiny floors.
- Decrease clutter in resident rooms and rearrange storage to place commonly used items within easy reach. Suggest using "reacher" to retrieve items from floor or shelves. Remove any step stools or ladders from resident rooms.
- Improve visual contrast by highlighting transitions in flooring, on stairs, elevator transitions, and curbs.
- Recommend carts/walker baskets to transport items instead of carrying them and trying to walk.
- Select firm chairs with solid arm rests.
- Rearrange resident furniture to allow safe walkway areas, position bed closer to bathroom if possible, raise bed if experiencing difficulty with sit to stand transferring, lower bed if falling out of bed and increase chair height.
- Provide verbal cues and signage to remind residents to use assistive devices.
- Have therapy/MD screen for adaptive equipment as needed, such as shower chair, raised toilet seat, bedside commode, etc.
- Relocate resident closer to dining, nursing stations, front door, etc.
- Install "resting" benches/chairs throughout hallways as permitted by fire marshal.
- Increase visual checks on resident.
- Implement toileting schedule.
- Instruct residents who experience symptomatic pressure to change positions slowly and pause before standing or walking.
- Consider hip protectors, floor mats, chair and/or bed alarms or other padded devices.
- Consider implementing fall detection technology, such as motion sensors, in rooms of high risk residents.



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