

THE BUZZ



SENIOR SAFETY AWARENESS

ARTICLES

PAGE 1	SENIOR SAFETY NEWS
PAGE 1	BUZZ'S NEW YEAR RESOLUTIONS
PAGE 2	PRESCRIPTIONS AND FALLS
PAGE 2	AVOIDING FALLS AS WE AGE
PAGE 3	DRUG ERRORS HURT ELDERLY
PAGE 3	TAI CHI MAY HELP IN AVOIDING FALLS
PAGE 3	THE PARABLE OF TWO WOLVES

Senior Safety News

We at Senior Safety Online want to help so that everybody can have a safe and healthy new year. Our goal is that we stay at home by avoiding accidents due to falls and fires.

Our mission is to keep seniors safe through awareness. We believe that this is an ongoing process and that seniors need to stay constantly aware.



We will increase our array of tools that seniors can use to stay safe whether they are living in senior housing facilities or at home.

This month we will have a safety booklet that is a compendium of safety tips for seniors living in senior housing. We developed this booklet in conjunction with EHDCC, a premier housing management company with buildings throughout the country.

Our senior home safety tips booklet will be on our site next month. We need to expand the senior housing booklet to include storage and outside areas. This booklet is currently in development.

In the near future we will be providing access to home safety products that seniors living at home can use to make life easier and insure that they continue to live at home. We believe that devices such as smoke detectors, emergency response systems, walking aids, etc. can save lives.

We are continuing to expand our presence in senior communities through retiree clubs and locals in conjunction with member organizations such as the IAMAW (International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers).

We look forward to continued growth through 2009.

William Fitch, CEO

Buzz has some New Year Resolutions that can help you keep safe!

Remember, to stay safe you must stay aware. The first line of defense in avoiding falls and fires is awareness. You can't let your guard down. Our minds say we can do things that our body says we can't. As we age we have to do three things to help us live at home: (1) Keep our lower bodies strong, and (2) Keep our living areas safe and



Resolution One: Keeping our bodies strong - Buzz Suggests!

1. Get an eye exam
2. Make sure you have your Flu shot
3. Make sure to get your annual check up
4. Find a low impact exercise routine that will strengthen our abdomen and lower body
 - Keep at it! Persevere! - If you don't use it you will lose it
 - **ALWAYS consult with your Doctor before initiating any exercise regimen.**

Staying active helps avoid falls and keeps you

Resolution Two: Keeping our homes safe - Buzz suggests using checklists to avoid fires and falls.

You should keep your lists handy and refer to them once a month. Awareness is vigilance and you are the sentry. You need to continually keep aware of hazards where you live.

Senior Safety Online has two sets of home safety checklists. One for those who live in Senior Housing Facilities and one for those seniors living at home in their communities.

Senior Housing Resident's list includes:

- Your Bedroom
- Your Kitchen
- Your Living Room
- Hallways and steps

Senior Safety online's list for Seniors living at home can be found at http://www.seniorsafetyonline.com/senior_housing.html. If you don't have access to the internet have a friend or family member download these lists. Refer to them Regularly!

For Seniors living at Home we have lists that help you maintain safety in:

- Your Bedroom
- Your Kitchen
- Your Living areas
- Your hallways and steps
- Your home's outside areas
- Storage areas such as garage or sheds

Senior Safety online's list for Seniors living at home can be found at http://www.seniorsafetyonline.com/home_safety.html. If you don't have access to the internet have a friend or family member download these lists. Refer to them Regularly!

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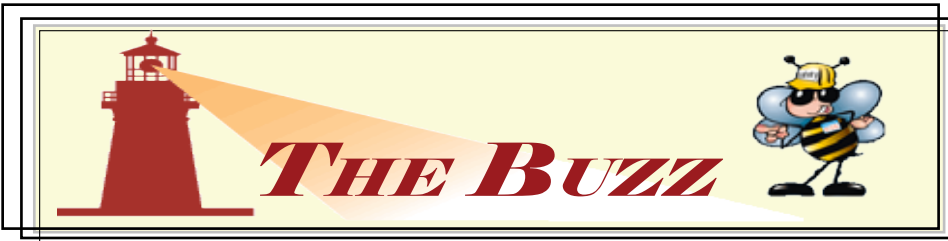
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PAGE 1 SENIOR SAFETY NEWS
 PAGE 1 BUZZ'S NEW YEAR RESOLUTIONS
 PAGE 2 PRESCRIPTIONS AND FALLS
 PAGE 2 AVOIDING FALLS AS WE AGE
 PAGE 3 DRUG ERRORS HURT ELDERLY
 PAGE 3 TAI CHI MAY HELP AVOID FALLS
 PAGE 3 THE PARABLE OF TWO WOLVES

Prescription Management and Falls

In today's medical landscape many seniors owe their lives to the pharmaceuticals developed in the last 30 years. Those with chronic conditions live longer and better because of their access to modern medicines.

The majority of elderly people take more than three prescriptions daily. Much has been said about negative physical reactions that can occur when taking multiple prescriptions. Especially when a senior is using more than one doctor.



At PRxN, our discounted prescription mail service, we are well aware of this problem and have implemented steps to minimize it. Among others, we use robotics, bar coding, a seven step review process for safety and a pro-active approach in notifying prescribing physicians when we find a problem.

BUT THERE IS ONE PROBLEM SENIORS TAKING MEDICATION HAVE THAT PRxN CANT SOLVE.

Medications taken whether alone or in combination can, in many cases, cause problems which lead to falls.

Seniors taking medication must be aware that while their prescriptions can save their life they can also do harm by leading to falls. In many cases only the senior taking the medication will know how his or her body reacts to it.

Seniors must be aware as to how they feel when taking their prescriptions. Feelings of dizziness, weakness in the legs, sleepiness or changes in vision are just a few of the signs that indicate the medications should be reviewed by either a doctor or pharmacist.

Be especially aware when you change or add medications. Ask your Doctor or Pharmacist how the new medication will affect balance. Have your Doctor or Pharmacist review your prescriptions (including vitamins, over the counter drugs and herbal remedies) regularly. Make and carry a list of your prescriptions with you when you visit.

WILLIAM A. MILLAR II RPh, D.Ph.

Taking Steps So Aging Does Not Mean Falling

By JANE E. BRODY

Published: December 26, 2006

Two Minnesota friends — Margaret, 79, and Davis, 84 — are a hearty pair who take an exercise walk for an hour each day. Then they return home to a kitchen that is an accident waiting to happen. On the floor are loose runners — beautiful rugs, to be sure, but a fall hazard for people of any age and especially risky for those over 65.

They did place slip-resistant mats under the rugs, which helped some. But the rugs still move around and can easily cause someone to trip. And when someone their age trips and falls, chances are something will break.

Falls are now the leading cause of injury-related deaths among people 65 and older, the national Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta recently reported. The fatality rate from falls rose by more than 55 percent from 1993 to 2003, the latest year for which statistics are available. In fact, death rates from falls have risen faster than injury rates from falls, in part because people are now living to ages when frailty raises the risk that a fall will be fatal.

BODILY DEFENSES

Knowing the underlying causes of falls suffered by older people will help you appreciate the steps experts recommend to prevent them. Heading the list of causes for otherwise healthy people is loss of muscle strength followed by diminished flexibility. Some medications taken by older people can cause dizziness or sleepiness and impair balance. People who have suffered a stroke or other neurological disorder may be unable to move normally.

Other predisposing factors common among older people include cardiovascular disease and accumulated injuries that weaken the musculoskeletal system. Diminished vision caused perhaps by cataracts, glaucoma, macular degeneration or lack of proper glasses is also a factor in falls among the elderly.

So, the first step is to build muscle strength in the thighs and trunk to increase stability. Try this simple exercise: Lie on your back on the floor and raise one leg at a time a foot off the floor, holding it there for 10 seconds. Gradually build up to 10

repetitions with each leg and you'll see how much stronger your thigh muscles can get.

Likewise, there are easy exercises to improve balance: Gently holding the back of a sturdy chair, raise one foot off the floor, then try to let go of the chair. Once that is mastered, try it with your eyes closed, then try it standing on your toes. Tai chi is also an excellent activity proven to improve balance and reduce falls.

Daily stretches, especially of the legs and hips, can slow the loss of flexibility that can result in a fall.

People over 50 — and especially those over 65 — should have annual eye exams by an ophthalmologist and not postpone getting new glasses or undergoing cataract surgery.

If you take medications, ask your pharmacist whether any of them, alone or in combination, may cause dizziness or sleepiness. If so, ask your doctor if a reduced dosage or another medication would be just as effective and safer.

Don't forget "dem bones," which need to be strong if they are to remain intact should you fall. In addition to consuming adequate amounts of calcium and vitamin D, you need to do weight-bearing exercise. Bone-benefiting exercises include walking, step and water aerobics, dancing, yoga, tai chi, hiking and resistance training. Cycling and swimming, while excellent activities especially for people with arthritis, are not as effective as walking for strengthening bones.

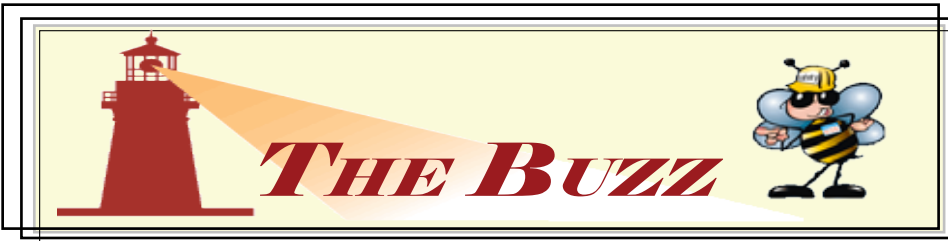
.....New York Times

Try to stay as active as you can and join with your friends and neighbors in using community dance classes or exercise groups. Find a partner and take daily walks. You don't have to run a marathon or climb a mountain, but do a little but do it a lot.



Keep your home safe (see the article on page one). Check your living areas regularly for hazards that can cause either falls or fires.

Visit www.seniorsafetyonline. This site contains tips and tools such as lists that will help you organize and keep your home safe.



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PAGE 1 SENIOR SAFETY NEWS
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 PAGE 2 PRESCRIPTIONS AND FALLS
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 PAGE 3 DRUG ERRORS HURT ELDERLY
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 PAGE 3 THE PARABLE OF TWO WOLVES

Drug Errors Hurt the Elderly and Cost Billions, Federal Study Says

Published: August 9, 1995

Millions of elderly Americans are hospitalized and many die each year after taking prescription drugs that are unsuited for older people or that interact adversely with other drugs, Congressional auditors said today.



“The inappropriate use of prescription drugs is a major cause of adverse drug reactions that, if severe enough, can result in hospitalization or death,” the General Accounting Office study said.

The study estimated that 17.5 percent of 30 million Medicare recipients who are not in rest homes or hospitals are being prescribed drugs that are unsafe for their age group or that duplicate other prescriptions.

Representative Ron Wyden, the Oregon Democrat who asked for the auditors’ report, said Federal research showed that health effects from the inappropriate use of prescription drugs add about \$20 billion to the nation’s hospital bills.

“The tragedy in all this is that these injuries, deaths and costs are almost always avoidable,” Mr. Wyden said at a news conference.

He attributed the problem to inadequate physician training in the treatment of elderly patients, the failure of health professionals to give patients full information on their drugs and a lack of coordination between doctors and pharmacists in treating patients.

He said improved education and more teamwork among health professionals “can save billions and billions of health care dollars and spare seniors unnecessary pain.”

The report said the inappropriate use of prescription drugs was particularly common among the elderly because they use more prescription drugs and thus were more apt to develop adverse reactions.

Aging makes people more sensitive to some drugs, the report said, and less able to eliminate drugs from the body. Also, the usual doses may be too strong

for older people. Drug reactions can cause drowsiness or loss of coordination, resulting in falls or accidents.

An estimated 32,000 elderly people suffer hip fractures every year as the result of falls, the report said, and about 16,000 elderly drivers have traffic accidents while suffering from adverse drug reactions.

The report recommended managed-care systems that monitor drug prescriptions and that have a primary physician who monitors drugs prescribed by specialists treating the same patient.

It also suggested that patients use drug review systems that monitor prescriptions, check for inappropriate drugs and, by auditing how often prescriptions are filled for chronic conditions, determine if drugs are properly used.

.....New York Times

Tai Chi may help Seniors avoid falls

Tai chi, an ancient Chinese martial art, may improve senior citizens’ strength and help them avoid falls, South Korean researchers find. Regular exercise is very important as we get older because when we get to 65 we start losing muscle strength at a rate of up to two percent per year. It is effective in fall prevention for older people because of improvements in strength and balance.

The researchers tested tai chi in older adults. The slow, gentle, and continuous movements help them develop stronger muscles, better balance control, concentration, and psychological well-being.

They found benefits including:

- Stronger knees and ankles
 - Better balance and flexibility
 - Improved walking
 - More confidence in the ability to avoid falls
- The tai chi students had fewer falls than others who didn’t take the class. Their study appears in the Journal of Advanced Nursing.

Tai chi uses slow, fluid body movements. It’s not a jarring form of exercise. Health experts want everyone to get enough exercise. That includes older adults.

Every year, about 30% of people aged 65 and older and living on their own fall. Some of the risk factors that lead to falls in seniors include imbalance, muscle weakness, and lack of flexibility — all of which can be modified.

Seniors who fall and are seriously injured may take a long time to recover. Meanwhile, they may be sidelined from their normal routine. That can lead to physical decline and depression.

The tai chi students had stronger knees and ankles than their peers. They also improved in flexibility and walking. The tai chi group had fewer falls during the study.

This is not to say that taking Tai Chi will definitely help you prevent falls but it may and it’s good for your body.

On caveat, do not start any exercise program before consulting with your Doctor!

The Parable of Two Wolves

The parable of two wolves is an old Cherokee Indian story.

An old Cherokee was teaching his young grandson one of life’s most important lessons. He told the young boy the following parable:



“There is a fight going on inside each of us. It is a terrible fight between two wolves,” he said.

“One wolf is evil. He is anger, rage, envy, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, resentment, lies, false pride, superiority, and ego.”

“The second wolf is good. He is joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, empathy, truth, compassion, and faith.”

The grandson thought about this for a moment. Then he asked his grandfather, “Which wolf will win this fight?”

The old Cherokee simply replied, “The one you feed.”