



Falls in Older Adults Fact Sheet

Falls and fall injuries:

- Are more common than strokes and can be just as serious in their consequences
- Are the most preventable cause of needing to move to a nursing home
- Lead to problems walking, getting around, and doing daily activities like dressing and bathing

Fall Facts:

- There were 1,088 reported falls that required hospitalization for adult over the age of 50 in Santa Barbara County in 2004.
- More than one third of adults 65 years or older fall each year
- Falls are also the leading cause of injury deaths and the most common cause of nonfatal injuries and hospital admissions for trauma.
- Of those who fall, 20 - 30% suffer moderate to severe injuries such as hip fractures or head traumas
- The most serious fall related injury is a hip fracture. Of all fall related injuries, hip fractures cause the greatest number of deaths and lead to the most severe health problems.
- According to Healthy People 2010, falls represent \$1.1 billion or 65% of all hospital charges.
- 3 in 10 adults over the age of 70 fall each year
- 2 in 10 adults over the age of 70 need home health care after being in the hospital will fall during the first month after coming home
- 1 in 10 adults over the age of 70 suffer a serious fall injury such as a broken bone or head injury
- 5 in 10 adults over the age of 70 have problems getting up without help after they have fallen
- Falls cause over 90% of broken hips; only half of those who break their hip will get around like they did before their broken hip
- In the United States, 16 percent of all Emergency Department visits and almost 7 percent of all hospitalizations are for fall-related injuries
- Many of the health problems that increase the chance of falling are known and are treatable.
- Common, treatable health problems and hazards include problems with walking or moving around, medications, foot problems or unsafe footwear, blood pressure dropping too much on getting up, problems seeing, and tripping hazards at home.

The common health problems for falling are:

- Problems walking or moving around
- 4 or more medications
- Foot problems, unsafe footwear
- Blood pressure drops too much on standing up/dizzy
- Problems with seeing
- Tripping hazards in your home