

Falls Among Seniors Can Be Prevented

BY JULIE ROSE

Falls are one of the leading causes of injury among older adults. One in four seniors is affected by falls that can result in hip fractures, broken bones, and head injuries.

While falls are common and have multiple factors – there are signs to look for, common factors that can lead to a fall, and ways to prevent them.

SIGNS TO LOOK FOR

Holding onto walls, furniture or another person when walking, difficulty standing from a seated position, and instability when extending to reach forward or up indicate an increased risk of falling. Acknowledging these signs and proactively addressing them is critical.

COMMON FACTORS THAT CAN LEAD TO A FALL

As we get older these common factors can increase our risk of falling:

- We become less active and lose some of our coordination, flexibility and balance
- Aging eyes have more difficulty seeing contrasting edges, tripping hazards and obstacles
- Prescriptions and over-the-counter medications can interact with each other or cause dizziness or dehydration



Julie Rose

- Chronic conditions such as diabetes, stroke or arthritis result in lost function

WAYS TO PREVENT FALLS

Follow these steps to ensure that you or your loved one don't experience the injuries and negative effects of a fall:

- Conduct a comprehensive risk assessment to determine what the fall risk level is and what can be done to reduce it – these risk assessments should be done

regularly to monitor changing conditions and needs.

- Create customized, individualized fall-prevention solutions as they are more effective than one-size-fits-all solutions.
- Be sure that lighting is adequate throughout the house, especially at the top and bottom of the stairs, and easily accessible when getting up in the middle of the night.
- All stairs should have two secure rails.
- Move rugs and electrical cords as needed to ensure they don't create a tripping hazard.
- If you or your loved one wears glasses, be sure that you have a current prescription and are wearing the glasses as advised by your eye doctor so vision impairment does not contribute to a fall.
- Ensure that all caregivers, if applicable, are aware of the fall risks and take steps to implement the established fall-prevention solutions – fall prevention is a team effort.
- Balance issues often contribute to falls, so keeping older adults moving and focusing on maintaining their balance is critical – being proactive early on prevents problems later on.
- Many falls occur in the bathroom, so install grab bars in the tub or

MORE INFORMATION

» Do you have questions or would like additional information? Please reach out to us at info@paladinlifecare.com or call 703.879.6992.

shower and near the toilet. It's important to make sure that safe toileting practices are in place with seniors and their caregivers while honoring seniors' privacy.

- Engage seniors in their fall prevention as this increases the potential for success – using interactive methods leverages the effectiveness of senior education about fall prevention.
- Monitor seniors' understanding and retention of fall-prevention techniques and solutions by asking them to share them back with you so you can repeat or re-emphasize what is needed to ensure they have a complete understanding they can implement.
- Make sure that seniors are reminded periodically of the fall-prevention steps they can take to remain safe and comfortable.

Julie Rose is CEO of Paladin Life Care, which provides care and advocacy for senior clients and those with disabilities in Virginia, Maryland and the District of Columbia.

CONCERT FOR A CURE

WITH JAY ALLEN

SATURDAY MAY 6

PROCEEDS BENEFIT THE ALZHEIMER'S ASSOCIATION

DOORS OPEN AT 6
\$30 GENERAL ADMISSION

THE SALIBURY CENTER
8890 MATHIS AVE
MANASSAS VA 20110

Scan QR Code or go to
bit.ly/TributeConcert2023

Northern Va. Senior Olympics Scheduled for September

The 2023 Northern Virginia Senior Olympics are scheduled for Saturday, Sept. 9 through Sunday, Sept. 24.

Online registration will open July 6 and close Aug. 24. A record number of individuals ages 50 to 100 participated in 2022.

"We are anticipating an even larger participation this year," said NVSO chairman Herb Levitan.

The registration fee remains unchanged this year at \$20 and covers an unlimited number of events. A few events require an additional fee due to the venue or special personnel or equipment required.

"A number of events need volunteers to assist the event director," Levitan said.

Synchronized diving has been added to diving events, and advanced Sudoku has been added to traditional Sudoku. In addition, nine-hole par 3 golf has been added as a new event.

To participate in the Senior Olympics, persons must be 50 years of age by Dec. 31 and live in a sponsoring jurisdiction. Past participants will receive an email in June with detailed information.

Competitors are divided into age groups as well as often by gender. Gold, silver and bronze medals are awarded after each event.



Eamonn Mceville participates in one of the track events at the Northern Virginia Senior Olympics last year. EDWARD D. MARION

HOW TO REGISTER

» **Online:** Visit www.nvso.us. The website also has results from 2022, photos, event rules and a list of events.

» **Need more information?** Email nvso1982@gmail.com

The Senior Olympics is sponsored by the cities of Alexandria, Fairfax and Falls Church and the counties of Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun, Fauquier and Prince William.

