



Jeb Bush
Governor

M. Rony François, M.D., M.S.P.H., Ph.D.
Secretary, Department of Health

PINELLAS COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:

Jeannine Mallory, Public Information Director
PINELLAS COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT
727-824-6908 (for media use only)

Tips for Older Adults

What You Can Do to Prevent Falls

Falls are not just the result of getting older. Many falls can be prevented. Falls are usually caused by a number of factors. By changing some of these things, you can lower your risk of falling.

Here, from the Pinellas County Health Department, are **four things you can do to prevent falls**:

1. **Begin a regular exercise program.** Lack of exercise leads to weakness and increases your risk of falling. Exercise is one of the most important ways to reduce your chances of falling. It makes you stronger and helps you feel better. Exercises that improve balance and coordination (like Tai Chi) are the most helpful. Ask your doctor or health care worker about the best type of exercise for you.
2. **Make your home safer.** According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), about half of all falls happen at home. To make your home safer:
 - Remove things you might trip over (such as papers, books and shoes) from areas where you walk.
 - Remove small throw rugs or use double-sided tape to keep the rugs from slipping.
 - Keep items you use often in cabinets that you can reach easily without having to use a step stool.
 - Have grab bars installed next to your toilet and in your tub or shower.
 - Use non-slip mats in the bathtub and shower floors.
 - Improve the lighting in your home. As you get older, brighter lights help you see better.
 - Have handrails and lights on all staircases.
 - Wear shoes that give good support and that have non-slip soles.
3. **Have your health care provider review all your medicines.** Have your doctor or pharmacist look at all the medicines you take – including those that don't need prescriptions, such as cold medicines. As you get older, the way some medicines work in your body can change. Some medicines, or combinations of medicines, can make you drowsy or light-headed – which can lead to a fall.
4. **Have your vision checked.** You may be wearing the wrong glasses or have a condition such as glaucoma or cataracts that limits your vision. Poor vision can increase your chances of falling.

For more information, contact the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control at www.cdc.gov/injury or the Pinellas County Health Department's Office of Injury and Violence Prevention at (727) 824-6908.

###

The mission of the Pinellas County Health Department is to promote, protect and improve the health and safety of residents and visitors through public and private community efforts.
www.PinellasHealth.com