Age Spots

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And We All Fall Down…or Not

It is almost September and there is a crispness in the air that hints of fall. Cooler temperatures, beautiful autumn colors, football and National Fall Prevention Month. That last one might surprise you but Fall Prevention Month is a designated month, for raising awareness about the risks and consequences of falls, particularly for older adults, and promoting strategies to prevent them.

According to the National Council on Aging (NCOA), falls are the leading cause of fatal and nonfatal injuries for older Americans. As we age, our balance, strength, and vision can change. Medications, clutter around the home, or poor lighting can also make a fall more likely.

We hope to shine a light on ways to prevent falls and increase safety. Here are some ways to lower your risk of falling:

* Stay Active. Exercise such as walking, tai chi and yoga can keep muscles strong and improve balance
* Review medication. Some medications can cause dizziness or drowsiness. Check with your doctor or pharmacist, especially when taking new medicines. Also, check how new medicine will interact with your other meds.
* Get regular vision and hearing checks. Poor vision can make it difficult to navigate areas. Low light, blurry vision and even glare can make it harder to judge steps, distance and obstacles in the way. Eye conditions such as glaucoma, cataracts and macular degeneration can increase fall risk. Inner ear issues can affect balance and hearing problems can cause us to miss yelled warnings or approaching hazards.
* Check your home for tripping hazards. Remove throw rugs and clutter off the floor, ensure proper lighting, and install grab bars in the bathrooms to ensure your home has lower risks.
* Wear proper shoes. Have shoes with non-slip soles and good support to stay safe. Avoid socks and slippers on smooth floors.

Not all falls can be prevented but many can and by taking a few precautions, you can improve your odds and stay safe and independent. If you have questions about aging or need assistance, please call Aging Matters 1-800-392-8771 at our NEW location 69 Doctors Park in Cape Girardeau, MO 63703. Because, Aging Matters.