

FALLS

Read the causes of resident falls below and see what you can do to help prevent them. There may be more than one correct answer.

Situations that may be related to falls:

- Wet floors
- Poor fitting or slippery footwear, or pants that are too long
- Not watching where they step
- Having clutter in their room
- Incontinence or hurrying to get somewhere
- Forgetting to use their walker or cane
- Reaching too far out of a chair or overhead
- Side effects of medications
- Acute or chronic illnesses
- Poor vision
- General weakness
- Forgetfulness, wandering, or being hungry, thirsty, hot, cold, bored or lonely
- Having a history of falls
- Dehydration or low blood sugar

Actions that may reduce the risk of falling:

- Be sure your residents are eating and drinking appropriate amounts of food and fluids.
- Become familiar with your residents, and know which residents have fallen recently; monitor them closely.
- Anticipate resident needs, and encourage use of the call light (should be kept within reach).
- Encourage rest periods if residents are unsteady on their feet, and engage them in exercise or restorative programs if appropriate.
- Report if a resident might need an eye exam.
- Watch for signs of illness.
- Report unusual symptoms.
- Place items within a resident's reach; encourage use of reaching devices.
- Remind residents to use their walkers and canes.
- Promote continence by assisting residents with their toileting needs.
- Help keep residents' rooms tidy.
- Teach residents to watch their step. Don't rush them!
- Encourage the resident to wear proper fitting clothing and proper footwear. Report ill-fitting clothes or shoes.
- Wipe up spills immediately and use a wet floor sign.

Additional Reading:

American Geriatrics Society/British Geriatrics Society Clinical Practice Guideline: *Prevention of Falls in Older Persons (2010)*. Available at: <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1532-5415.2010.03234.x/pdf>.

Can you think of any other interventions not listed?

Answer key: The interventions are listed in the reverse order of the corresponding resident situations.