



## Objectives/What You Will Learn:

- Roles of the In-home aide in falls prevention
- Safety tips in the client's Home
- Home Care Client's at risk of falls
- Falls statistics

## Things for the Aide to notice in the client's environment:

### Is the lighting?

- ▶ Bright enough?
- ▶ Too Bright?
- ▶ Adequate for stairs & steps?
- ▶ Switches easy to reach?
  - From bed?
  - In hallway?

### Look at the floors for:

- ▶ Holes under rugs?
- ▶ Clutter?
- ▶ Wrinkled carpets?
- ▶ Cords?
- ▶ Oxygen tubing?

### Footwear:

Is it sturdy, non skid, well fitting footwear?

## FALLS PREVENTION

**Home Care Client's at risk of falls include those who:**

- Have a history of a fall in the past year.
- Have a history of neurological problems (stroke, alzheimer's, Parkinson's) or vestibular disease (vertigo, dizziness, etc.)
- Have a history of degenerative joint disease of the knees &/or hips.
- Are ages 65 or older
- Client's on certain medications such as sedatives

## Why is a fall in older adults so serious?

Statistics from the Center for Disease Control's (CDC) National Center for Injury Prevention and Control show that:

- Twenty to 30 percent of older adults who fall suffer moderate to severe injuries such as bruises, hip fractures, or head traumas. These injuries can make it hard to get around and limit independent living. They also can increase the risk of early death (Alexander et al. 1992; Sterling et al. 2001).
- The risk of being seriously injured in a fall increases with age. Adults 85 and older who fall are four to five times more likely to be injured than people aged 65 to 74 (Stevens et al. 2005)
- Most fractures among older adults are caused by falls (Bell et al. 2000).
- Falls are the most common cause of traumatic brain injuries, or TBI (Jager et al. 2000). In 2000, 46 percent of deaths from falling among older adults were caused by a traumatic brain injury (Stevens et al. 2006).

Sources- AHHC 2010 conference presentation- Falls Prevention- Dave Tushar PT- UNC/Rex; AHHC 2006- The Aides Role in Improving Ambulation and Transfers- Cheryl Atwater, PT; Best Practice Intervention Package Fall Prevention- HHQI; Fall Prevention Awareness curriculum- PHI and the NCOA and the Department of Labor. N.C. Division of Public Health / [www.ncpublichealth.com](http://www.ncpublichealth.com) / Injury Epidemiology & Surveillance Unit/ 919-707-5425 / [www.injuryfreenc.ncdohhs.gov](http://www.injuryfreenc.ncdohhs.gov)- 8/11; NC Falls prevention coalition.

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For more information on AHHC's endorsed risk management and insurance program visit:  
<http://www.homeandhospicecare.org/insurance/home.html>

**The risk of falling increases after an elderly individual comes home from the hospital.**

**Did You Know?** Fall prevention is an important factor in decreasing avoidable. Hospitalizations, placement in facility based care (such as Nursing Homes) and improving patient safety.

IN-HOME AIDES- PARTNERS  
IN QUALITY CARE- June 2012

## In-Home Aide Checklist:

### Do you:

- Report all falls (even unwitnessed) to your supervisor?  
The patient may report a fall to you but be hesitant to tell the nurse or therapist.  
Report any changes in balance or gait that you observe.  
Report any symptom that could lead to falls (e.g.: "I can't see as well as I used to.")
- Know how many falls occur each month at your agency?
- Report any environmental problems that could cause falls to your supervisor?
- Report patients not following fall prevention measures?
- Reinforce all fall prevention interventions?  
Ask your supervisor if you have questions about these.
- Reinforce the need for the patient to rise slowly to avoid getting dizzy and falling?
- Know how to assist a patient after a fall?  
Discuss this with your supervisor and know your agency policies and procedures.
- Report any concerns with defective mobility equipment to your supervisor?
- Reinforce the need for patient to wear shoes or slippers with rubber soles and **avoid** loose fitting shoes or slippers that are open toed/flip-flop style?
- Remind the patient to use their walker or cane correctly?

The 34th Annual National Nursing Assistants Week is set to take place from June 16-23. The annual event recognizes and celebrates nursing assistants for the daily care they provide in nursing homes, home care, and other long-term care settings. Thanks to In-Home Aides for all you do!!!

### **BE SURE TO KNOW WHAT IS ON THE CARE PLAN:**

#### Precautions

- Hip precautions
- Weight bearing precautions
- Other appliances- Braces, immobilizers
- Observe improvement or decline
- Observe safety issues
- Hear responses from family members
- Recognize the need for assistance with transfers and gait
- How much assistance they need: when and where
  - Use of gait aide; steps, ramps, uneven surfaces

Other tips for falls prevention - keep pathways clear, make sure there is good lighting, notify your supervisor if you think your client would benefit from grab bars or rails in the shower, on stairs, in the bathroom.



Over 50 percent of people hospitalized for falls are discharged to a nursing facility, 16 percent return home, 13 percent have home health care, and 8 percent enter rehabilitation.

Being afraid of falling is understandable, especially after a person has had a fall. It's good for clients to be concerned about safety and to be more careful about moving around. However, **sometimes fear of falling makes elders stop doing things that they are still capable of doing.**

When they stop doing their usual physical or social activities, they risk becoming physically weaker and then more fearful.

**This downward cycle results in them increasing the risk of falling- be sure to talk to your supervisor if you notice this with your client's.**

**Older adults can** ask their doctor or pharmacist to review their medicines — both prescription and over-the counter — to reduce side effects and interactions.



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**Congratulations to The Association for Home & Hospice Care of NC (AHHC) 2012 In-Home Aide of the Year Award recipient -Kenita Matthews with Home Health of Randolph Hospital-**

In-Home Aides play a vital role in serving NC's chronically ill, disabled and aging populations. Kenita Matthews with Home Health of Randolph Hospital was the 2012 In-Home Aide of the year at the AHHC annual convention. Kenita cares for a woman with Alzheimer's disease. Kenita has cared for other clients as well, and has always given the same warm and compassionate care. She is very professional in her interactions. She is very dependable with no absences in the past year. Her documentation is neat and accurate. She follows the care plan and is honest and trustworthy. She regularly attends her agency's educational meetings and completes the written educational materials that are provided. She cares not only for the client but the family unit which provides comfort and reassurance to the entire family and helps strengthen them to continue to maintain this client in the home she designed and loves.

