



Steward Health Care Helps You Age Safely

Prevent Falls and Help Maintain Independence

Falls are unpredictable for nearly everyone, but more so for people age 65 and older. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), more than one-third of people in this age category fall each year. In addition, those who fall once are two to three times more likely to fall again.

Preventing falls is especially important in the winter months – the most notorious season for accidental falls due to ice and snow in the New England region and greater inactivity. Follow these safety tips for making your home and property and yourself safer:

- Safeguard your home by removing throw rugs, electrical cords and paper piles that could trip you up.
- Keep your driveway and sidewalks clear of leaves and other debris that could cause you to trip during these months. Repair cracks, lips or dips.



- Once winter arrives, consider hiring a snow removal service or a neighbor to shovel your sidewalk, steps and driveway. Spread rock salt, grit or sand to help prevent slips and falls.
- Use shoe traction devices when walking outside in ice and snow.
- Have your pharmacist review all your medications several times a year to check for potential interactions that could trigger dizziness.

- Get your eyes checked. Impaired vision contributes to falls.

“Staying as active as possible is another way to prevent falls,” says Dr. Adam Harder, an orthopedic surgeon with Holy Family Hospital. “Seniors who are less active during the winter season experience higher levels of instability. Activity helps you to maintain balance and build muscle strength.”

Here are some tips to keep you active:

- Move your walking regimen indoors to continue it year-round. Fitness clubs and shopping malls are great places to keep moving.
- Build core muscle strength and strengthen your thigh muscles by exercising or attending fitness classes. Weakness from underuse of the quads and lack of physical strength are major contributors to falls.

Steward Family Hospitals offer fall prevention programs aimed at keeping older adults safe in their homes and surroundings. To learn more, visit www.steward.org.

Reducing Your Risks for Problems with Medication Use

When you take a lot of medicine, how can you tell if you are taking more than you need? Your doctor can help you to determine this and manage your medications. Follow these steps to reduce your risks for problems with your medicines:

- Make a list of all your medicines. Update the list when your doctor prescribes a new medicine.
- Read and save all the written information that comes with your medicines.
- Take medicines exactly as your doctor prescribes.
- Do not skip doses.
- Use a memory aid (such as a calendar, chart or weekly pill box) to remember to take your medicines on time.
- Avoid mixing alcohol and medicines.



- Take all of the medicine you are prescribed unless the doctor says it is okay to stop.
- Do not take medicines prescribed to another person or share your medicines.
- Check the expiration dates and dispose of expired medicines properly.

“The best way to fine-tune your medicines is to work with your

doctor,” says Dr. Juliet Nimako, a primary care and family medicine physician with Norwood Hospital. “After all, most doctors are experts in the drug treatment of disease. But your doctor can only help if you tell him or her about all the medicines you are taking, including prescription and over-the-counter drugs and supplements.”

Thoroughly review your medicines with your doctor at least once a year. Another key to managing your medicines is to ask questions. Keep asking until you understand the dose, frequency and purpose of the medicines you are taking. Finally, don’t be afraid to ask about nondrug options that can help you minimize your use of medicines.

At the Center of Senior Fitness

Heard of core conditioning? It’s the “apple-a-day” way for you to ensure that your body stays strong and steady.

Simply put, core conditioning is a series of exercises that target your core – the body’s center of power that starts just below your shoulders and ends just below your hips. You work out to gain strength in the muscles that control your trunk

and spine while improving balance, agility and flexibility. Adding core strength lets you continue to perform daily functions like lifting grocery bags, playing with your grandchildren and getting in and out of your car. A strong, stable core also helps reduce your risk of injury and prevent back pain.

Try yoga, tai chi, Pilates or weight training to build the back,



abdominal, thigh and buttock muscles associated with a strong core. Check with your physician first to be sure you get started on the fitness level that’s right for you.

MEET THE EXPERT

Patient Gets Back to Work Quickly with Alternative Hip Replacement Procedure

In 2007, James F., of Methuen, Mass., had a successful hip resurfacing procedure on his left side but continued to live with lack of motion on his right side. When it became painful this past spring, the 58-year-old self-employed route delivery driver knew it was time to seek out treatment.

After reading about an alternative procedure for total hip replacement, the Direct Anterior Approach technique, he knew this was what he wanted. The Direct Anterior Approach technique is minimally invasive and muscle sparing. It virtually eliminates the risk of dislocation and maintains full range of motion in the hip.

“I researched the procedure, in depth,” says James. “I liked that there were no restrictions – once the operation is complete, you have more freedom of movement in the hip.”

James approached Dr. Thomas Hoerner, an orthopedic surgeon at Holy Family Hospital, and on Oct. 7, 2013, he performed the technique on James’ hip in an hour and a half. After a two-day hospital stay, he was discharged home on crutches instead of a walker.

James was diligent about doing his at-home physical therapy exercises and eventually moved to using one crutch, then a cane. In less than two weeks after having the procedure, he stopped using the cane and returned to work on day 16.

“I was motivated and needed to return to work as soon as possible. Dr. Hoerner said I could return to my normal activities when I felt up to it,” says James. “I have a physical job, but if I had a desk job I could have gone back to work in just a week instead of two!”



Answers for Achy Joints from Dr. Jerald Katz

Dr. Katz is the chair of the Department of Orthopedics and leads the Center for Orthopedics Excellence at Saint Anne’s Hospital, and is a physician at Coastal Orthopaedics Institute based in Fall River.

Typically, the general wear and tear on a person’s joints increases as they age. Dr. Katz offers alternative ways you can also soothe sore joints:

Get active. “Joints in motion stay in motion, joints at rest stay at rest,” says Dr. Katz. “So the more you move the better.” Sign up for a yoga class or start a regular swimming, walking or bicycling routine. These are all low-impact forms of exercise that won’t put a lot of pressure on joints. Also, mix up your routine so you don’t get bored, strengthen other muscle areas and maintain motion in your joints.

Eat healthy. Eating a healthy diet and controlling your weight can minimize stress on your joints. Stick to foods low in saturated fats and eat plenty of fruit, vegetables and whole grains. “Also, increase your intake of calcium- and vitamin D-rich foods to keep bones from becoming osteoporotic,” explains Dr. Katz.

Cool your aches. To reduce pain and swelling, apply an ice pack or a bag of frozen peas to sore joints for 15 minutes.

Soak in your tub. A warm, relaxing bath before bed can relieve muscle tension, ease aching joints and help you sleep better.

Go for a massage. A massage can help decrease pain, increase circulation, reduce stress and improve flexibility. Find a certified massage therapist who treats people with arthritis.

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Healthy Recipe: Velvety Yam Soup



This homemade soup is quick and easy to whip up, with a full serving of vegetables in every bowl.

Preparation time: 25 minutes

Number of servings: 4

Ingredients

2 medium yams or sweet potatoes (about 8 ounces each)

2 medium leeks
2 tablespoons fat-free chicken stock

½ teaspoon dried dill
1-½ cups evaporated skim milk

Directions

Peel the yams or sweet potatoes and slice into ¾-inch chunks. Place in a 1-½ quart casserole dish. Trim the leeks slit lengthwise and wash well. Coarsely chop and add to the dish. Stir in the stock and dill. Cover the dish with vented plastic wrap and microwave on high for 5 minutes, or until the yams or sweet potatoes are just tender. Let stand for 4 minutes. Transfer the mixture to a blender. Pour the milk into a 2-cup glass container and microwave on high for 2 minutes, or until warm. Add to the blender and puree. Serve warm.

Nutrition Facts – Serving Size: ¼ of recipe. Per serving: 230 calories, 0g total fat, 0g saturated fat, 0mg cholesterol, 170mg sodium, 49g carbohydrates, 7g dietary fiber, 13g sugar, 9g protein, 15 percent vitamin A, 15 percent vitamin C, 30 percent calcium, 8 percent iron.

* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.

Recipe courtesy of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Fruits & Veggies Matter.