

Fall Prevention

As we enter the holiday season, we will have the chance to catch up and spend time with our loved ones. This provides a great opportunity to talk to your elderly family members about fall prevention. Hip fractures from falls are becoming more prevalent across the United States. Every year, around the holidays I see an increase in the number of hip fractures at our area hospitals. This is often times due to the increased activity, such as shopping, cooking, cleaning, of the older population as they prepare for the holidays.

Hip fractures that occur as a result of a fall are typically avoidable. Many of these patients fall in their home from tripping hazards. These include: throw rugs, TV cables,

phone cords, steps, or loose objects on the floor. I recommend that you go through your own or your family member's house and remove these known hazards. Evaluate and remove throw rugs, pick up loose cords, install hand rails, and clean up any clutter around the house, such as toys that visiting children may bring. Make sure there is adequate lightning especially around outdoor steps and stairs. These simple steps will dramatically decrease the chance of your loved one sustaining a fall and possible injury.

Osteoporosis, or a decrease in bone density, can lead to hip fractures as well. This typically affects post menopausal women, but can affect men as well. There are many factors that may lead to a person to be at risk for

osteoporosis. These include smoking, poor diet, sedentary lifestyle, and heredity. If you think you are at risk from osteoporosis, contact your primary care physician to see if you may need a DEXA scan to evaluate your bone density. There are many good medications that can slow osteoporosis and even reverse the softening of the bone.

Falls and hip fractures can be a devastating injury to a person, especially the elderly. By taking the time to review the osteoporosis risk factors and removing the trip hazards around the house, you can dramatically reduce the chance for yourself or your loved ones sustaining a fall and possible hip fracture this holiday season. I hope you have a safe and joyous holiday season.

Dr. Argo is fellowship trained and board certified in orthopaedic surgery and sports medicine. He is the team physician for East Central High School, Oak Hills High School, The College of Mt. St. Joseph and the medical director and team physician for the Cincinnati Cyclones. Dr. Argo sees patients at the Beacon West and Batesville locations also providing a Saturday sports injury clinic for your convenience.

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