

Slips, Trips, and Falls



Slip, Trip and Fall Prevention

What is the difference between a slip, trip or fall? Very little, if you are the person who has had the slip, trip or fall. The pain is the same, so really, it doesn't matter which one caused your accident...right?

Actually there are some very significant differences between the three, how they occur and how you can take steps to protect yourself.

This pamphlet will give you some tips to reduce your risk of a slip, trip or fall ...and STAY SAFE!

Slips

Slips occur when there is not enough grip or traction between your feet and the surface you are walking on. Most commonly the causes and appropriate prevention include:

Wet surfaces:

- Take shorter steps, walk with feet pointed out slightly and allow for more space to make turns.

Spills:

- Clean up spills immediately.

Weather Hazards:

- Walk slower so your feet can react to changes in traction.
- Wear shoes or boots with good grip.
- Dry off shoes as soon as possible after entering a building. Wet shoes on dry floors are as slippery as dry shoes on wet floors.
- Clear snow from steps and walkways as soon as possible after a snowfall and use salt.
- Wear sunglasses on sunny winter days so you can better see slippery areas.

Trips

Trips usually happen when your foot hits an object and your momentum throws you off balance.

To decrease your risk for this type of injury:

- Be watchful and careful of uneven walking surfaces and report any uneven or broken pavement or need for handrails, right away.
- Be aware of gaps, lips and raised surfaces when stepping into and out of elevators.
- Keep floors clear, uncluttered, and free of loose rugs or mats and electrical cords and small furniture (i.e. footstools, small coffee tables).
- Use a cordless phone and never “rush” to answer it when it rings.
- Wear flat shoes, preferably with a back.
- Make sure you have good lighting in all areas of your home.
- If you wear glasses, clean them often and right away if they fog up in cold weather.
- Don’t use small radiant heaters, not only are they a tripping hazard, but if you trip on them you may also burn yourself.

Falls

Falls can occur anytime, anyplace, and to anyone while doing everyday activities. They put you at risk of serious injury, but many are preventable. Falls usually take place from one level to another. The most common types of falls occur in situations involving chairs and ladders.

- From bed, when you rise from a laying down position, you should sit up first and dangle your legs off the bed for 12 seconds. When you rise, brace yourself with your hands on the bed at either side, place your heels down and tilt your hips forward to rise to a standing position.
- Never stand on a chair to reach a high object, use a ladder. When using a ladder, use the proper size and type and be sure to use it safely.
- Walk up and down stairs, never run or jump from the last step. Use the handrails. Report any unsafe conditions of stairs immediately.
- In the bathroom, keep floors clear of mats, or use non-slip mats. Use a shower mat in the bathtub. Always use handrails or hold on to the wall when getting into and out of bathtub or shower.
- Remember, be careful, watch your step and never rush. NO injury is worth it!