

Preventing the Fall

A fall prevention program



A personalized Fall Prevention Program will help you:

Identify *your* risk factors



Modify those factors to prevent falls
and the consequences that follow



Improve mobility



Regain and maintain independence



Determine the need for a walking aid



Falls in older adults are one of the leading causes of serious injury and loss of independence. The American Geriatrics Society (AGS) blames falls as the fifth leading cause of death in those over 65 and a major cause of disability.



Survivors of falls often are forced to become dependent on skilled care or require hospitalization to recover from hip fractures, head trauma, and other injuries that resulted from their fall. After these individuals recover, they frequently have to deal with the fear of falling and apprehension which often prevents returning to independence with daily activities.

The Program

Entry into the program requires a doctor's referral based on a history of falls, near falls, sudden loss of balance, unsteady walking (gait), or difficulty with daily activities such as moving from sitting to standing. Diagnoses or factors that may precede these problems include degenerative joint disease, knee replacement, general muscle weakness (due to age or sickness) and stroke. The program consists of an evaluation, treatment, and instruction in a home exercise program.

Evaluation

An evaluation is performed to determine why you fall or if you are at risk for falls and to identify which factors contribute to this risk. These could be related to environmental issues, vision, the vestibular system, strength, balance, flexibility, endurance, step length and walking speed. A health questionnaire and several tests are performed to determine if these factors are present. These tests measure:

- Blood pressure and heart rate
- Hip, knee, ankle strength and endurance
- Hip, knee, and ankle flexibility
- Balance
- Walking characteristics

After the evaluation is completed, the results are sent to your physician.

The good news is that two-thirds of all falls are preventable, and following a customized exercise program can play a big role in fall prevention.

Treatment

Treatment will generally consist of two therapy sessions per week for four weeks. After those four weeks, a second evaluation is performed to determine the level of progress and to assess the need for continuation of the program. Treatment consists of:

- Education to modify environmental factors
- Flexibility training
- Strength training
- Muscle endurance training
- Gait training—walking speed and step length
- Instruction in a home exercise program

The general goals of the treatment program are to modify the individual's risk factors, decrease risks for falls, improve safety, and maintain or regain independence. Specific goals important to the patient will be addressed to ensure that an individualized treatment program is developed to help reach these goals.

Strength

Strength and muscle endurance are critical factors in fall prevention. Your therapist will test the strength of your legs and trunk in a variety of ways.

Balance

Efficient interaction between the visual, muscular, and neurological systems of the body is needed to provide good body awareness and balance during daily activities. Failure of any of these systems can contribute to falls. A balance test followed by a customized treatment program can prevent falls.

Walking Speed and Step Length

Assessment of walking speed and step length is important because these have a direct link to falls. Improving walking speed, distance, and step length will improve your safety and independence.

**A physician referral is needed
for the Fall Prevention Program.
Call your personal physician or Palmetto
Health Baptist Physical Therapy
at 296-5486 to find out how the
Fall Prevention Program can help you.**



**Stay healthy.
Stay independent.
Stop falls before they happen.**



Palmetto Health Baptist Physical Therapy

Taylor at Marion Street
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Ph. (803) 296-5486 Fax (803) 296-3947

*To find us at Palmetto Health Baptist take elevator D
to the Basement level.*

Other Services Offered

Orthopedic Physical Therapy
Sports Physical Therapy
Neck and Back Therapy
Neurological Therapy
Prenatal and Postnatal Back Pain Program
Fall Prevention Program

palmettohealth.org

You may be asked to pay a deposit or co-payment depending on your insurance. Deposits and co-payment amounts are based on services rendered and are considered payment towards the portion of your charges that will not be covered by insurance. You will be billed later for any balance due over and above the deposit. To ensure proper billing, please have your insurance card(s) and picture identification available for copying. Palmetto Health accepts cash, checks, and most major credit/debit cards (MasterCard, Visa, Discover and American Express).

*Patients are admitted to this facility and are rendered services
without distinction due to race, color, national origin,
handicapping condition or age.*