

## The High Cost of Falls

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Falls are the leading cause of injury-related hospitalizations for seniors. One fall can lead to a permanent loss of independence.

### 1. The "Safety Sweep" Checklist

- **Floors:** No scatter rugs, extension cords, or clutter in pathways.
- **Lighting:** Nightlights in bathrooms and hallways. Ensure the client can reach the lamp from their bed.
- **Bathroom:** Use grab bars and non-slip mats in the shower. Encourage the use of a shower chair.
- **Footwear:** Clients should wear sturdy, non-slip shoes—no loose slippers or "socks only."

## 2. Assistive Device Safety

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Assistive devices only work if used correctly. Check equipment at the start of every shift.

- **Walkers:** Ensure all four tennis balls/tips are secure. The client should never "reach" for the walker; it should stay close to their body.
- **Canes:** Should be used on the **strong side** to support the weak side.
- **Wheelchairs:** ALWAYS lock the brakes before any transfer. Move the footrests out of the way to prevent tripping.

**DURING A FALL:** If a client begins to fall while you are assisting them, do not try to "catch" them or stop the fall. Instead, widen your stance and slowly **guide them to the floor** while protecting their head.

**Quiz Prep:** You notice the client's walker has a wobbly wheel.

*Action:* Stop using it immediately, ensure the client is safe in a chair, and notify the supervisor/family to arrange repair.