



Ask An Angel...



Our *Ask An Angel* correspondent is Arlene Petersen, Certified Senior Advisor and Life Care Navigation Specialist in the area of senior home care.

Q.

I've fallen for the first time recently and it really scared me. Since this happened to me, my friends have told me to expect it to happen again. Is this true or am I just being too worried?

A.

Falling is a frightening experience and causes can run the gamut from changes in medication, to poor lighting, to dehydration and poor nutrition, to dizziness from bending and stooping, to tripping on clutter or even tripping on our own two feet!

It's natural to think about falling again, but rather than worrying, try to analyze what caused you to fall and see if there is something that can be modified in the home as a fall prevention tactic.

I have a few suggestions for home modifications that are common adjustments for those who have a history of falls. Some modifications are easier than others, for sure. Here is my checklist for you to take into consideration:

- How is the lighting in your home? Make sure your home is well lit. This can be done by simply changing light bulbs to a brighter bulb. (Energy efficient bulbs that use less watts can be used, but remember while they give off more light, they often take a minute or two to reach their brightest. So, BE CAREFUL!)
- Be careful when reaching into cabinets. Bending over or reaching high up into cabinets on tippy toes might create imbalance and dizziness. Carefully consider if your home needs modifications such as lowering overhead cabinets.

- Install handrails on both sides of a hallway or stairwell. It's an inexpensive way to offer double the protection, plus it helps with stability as you walk.
- Consider inspecting your inside route to make sure it is safe and free from clutter. Think about relocating, tossing, or donating items that may be trip hazards. Throw rugs make a home feel cozy and comfy, but they are looming culprits in causing falls.
- Make sure you are taking in plenty of water. It's so hard to get the recommended daily water intake without feeling waterlogged, however dehydration can lead to dizziness and urinary tract infections which can also cause weakness and can attribute to fall risks.
- Proper nutrition is also an important key to help prevent fall risks. How would your car run if you put corn syrup in the gas tank instead of gas? Not so good, right? Well your body needs the proper fuel also. Get those daily servings of fruits and vegetable to be in your top condition.
- Do you wear floppy slippers or a long bathrobe? We all have our favorite comfy clothes, but make sure they fit you well! Your slippers should fit you properly and have non-skid soles and your bathrobe should be tied so that it does not drape on to the floor.

These are just a few tips to help you fend off those worrisome thoughts. If you'd like a free brochure about fall prevention, just give me a call at 847-429-0100. I'll mail one out to you and you can use the checklist that is in the brochure in addition to the tips I've given to you today.

Have a question for our angel correspondent? You can send our angel an email to AskAnAngel@att.net or send your question via mail to Ask An Angel, 65 Woodbury St., South Elgin, IL 60177.