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## **Take Charge. Prevent Falls. What Are You Doing to Keep Yourself From Falling?**

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One fall can drastically change a person's life. Falls are not inevitable or a natural part of the aging process. There are many things a person can do to remain active, independent, and fall-free.

The California State Legislature recently designated September 21-27 **Fall Prevention Awareness Week**. The Down with Falls Coalition, a collaboration of health professionals, government agencies, and community organizations, will be out in the community during the week presenting fall prevention information at various locations.

### Common reasons for falling are:

- Having problems walking or moving around
- Taking 4 or more medications
- Having foot problems and wearing unsafe footwear
- Experiencing dizziness due to a sharp drop in blood pressure when standing up
- Developing vision problems
- Having tripping hazards in your home (throw rugs, electrical cords, thresholds)

### Simple steps to reduce your chances of falling:

1. Talk with your doctor to discuss any health issues, such as osteoporosis ("weak bones"), your medications, hearing and vision problems, or feeling faint or off balance.
2. If you aren't already active, begin an exercise program. However, talk with your doctor before starting anything new. Strength training and weight-bearing exercises (such as walking or dancing) are important to keeping you strong and to improve muscle tone.
3. Your pharmacist can also look at your medications (prescriptions and over-the-counter) to check for side effects that can make you dizzy or affect your coordination.
4. Make sure your home is free of tripping and slipping hazards, has sufficient lighting, and sturdy grab bars and handrails.

Call the County of Orange Office on Aging's Information Specialists at **1-800-510-2020** or **1-714-567-7500** to request fall prevention materials (home safety checklists, medication charts, brochures) and learn about local resources and services. The Office on Aging Information and Assistance Specialists also have information on all programs and services for older adults in Orange County, including in-home assistance, transportation, caregiver support, counseling, residential facilities, and meal programs.