



ASK THE SOCIAL WORKER

Question: My 74-year-old father fell at home last week. It scared him and all of the family, but fortunately he wasn't hurt. Is there anything we can do to prevent more falls?

Answer: I am glad your father wasn't injured by the fall — although a sudden fall is always startling and frightening. Falls are actually more of a health risk to older adults than strokes and heart attacks combined. It is estimated that one-third of older adults, age 65 and older, fall each year in the U.S. Half of all falls happen in the home, but falls are not an inevitable part of getting older. Falls such as those caused by muscle weakness, poor balance, fatigue, drowsiness, adverse medication interactions, vision problems or hazards in the home can be avoided.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention offers these suggestions to help older adults reduce their risk of falling:

- Exercise regularly.
- Participate in programs that improve balance, such as Tai Chi.
- Check prescriptions and over-the-counter medications for side effects and interactions.
- Have an annual eye exam.
- Improve lighting in the home.
- Reduce safety hazards inside the home.

I recommend your father discuss his fall with his doctor, if he hasn't already. It is well known that older adults who have fallen are 2-3 times more likely to fall again. Even if your father wasn't hurt, the underlying cause(s) of his fall should be identified, treated and corrected. If his physician isn't a geriatrician — a board certified physician who has completed additional training to become board certified in geriatric medicine — consider locating a geriatrician to treat him. Visit the American Medical Association's Web site at www.ama-assn.org and use the "DoctorFinder" tool to identify physician's by specialty.

Encourage your father to obtain a personal emergency response system that will allow him to summon help in the event he has another fall and does require assistance. The Motion Picture Pioneers Assistance Fund (MPPAF) has coupons that provide a discount on the cost of activating a Philips Lifeline personal emergency response system. Call the MPPAF at (888) 994-3863, ext 2370 to request a coupon or more information.

Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, www.cdc.gov; National Institute on Aging Senior Health, <http://nihseniorhealth.gov>; Philips Lifeline, www.lifelinesystems.com.

JOKE OF THE MONTH

**I bought a raffle ticket.
The second prize is a car.
The first prize is a parking space!**
— Milton Berle's Private Joke File

Laughter is known to boost the immune system, lower blood pressure, burn calories and release pleasure-inducing chemicals in the brain.

CONTRIBUTORS

- Veronica Rosenblatt, MA, MS, CMC
Director of Social Services
- Karen Wiener, MA, MFT, CMC
Manager of Social Services
- Cheryl Cohen, MSW, LCSW
Social Worker





WEIGHT LOSS OPTIONS TODAY



You may have heard that when you want to lose weight you should eat less and exercise more. Sounds simple enough, but what about those dietary supplements that claim to reduce weight, the new over-

the-counter diet pill Alli, or prescription diet pills that suppress the appetite or decreases fat absorption?

A few facts from the Food and Drug Administration, FDA, might help you sort out available weigh loss options. The FDA regulates most facets of prescription and over-the-counter diet drugs, including testing, manufacturing, labeling, advertising, marketing, efficacy and safety. The diet pill Alli is a FDA approved over-the-counter strength version of the prescription drug Xenical, which decreases fat absorption. The FDA regulates dietary supplements (“natural diet pills”) as

food and does not require the same level of efficacy and safety standards it mandates for prescription and over-the-counter diet drugs. However, these dietary supplements may interact adversely with certain medical conditions, prescriptions or over-the-counter drugs.

David Orloff, M.D., the Director of the FDA's Division of Metabolic and Endocrine Drug Products, says, “There is no magic pill ... the best effect you're going to get is with a concerted long-term regimen of diet and exercise. If you choose to take a drug along with this effort, it may provide additional help.”

So remember, consult your doctor and decide together which weigh loss options are best for you.

Sources: WebMD, www.webmd.com; Health, www.health.com; Food, Drug and Health Information, www.fda.org; Weight Loss Research, www.weightlossresearch.net; U.S. Food and Drug Administration, www.fda.gov.

NEW ADDITIONS TO THE MPPAF'S NATIONAL RESOURCE DIRECTORY

Big Brothers Big Sisters: www.bbbs.org, 215-567-7000

For over 100 years, this national organization has been helping children ages 6-18 reach their potential through mentored relationships. Volunteers are welcome.

Administration for Children and Families: www.acf.hhs.gov

A federal agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that provides links for children and family support services and programs by state, territory, local and tribal organizations.

Public Broadcasting Station Kids and Reading Rainbow: www.pbskids.org/readingrainbow

This non-profit provides information to promote involvement with young children and learning. Their book of the week and resource library encourages appropriate themes and book choices.



QUOTE OF THE MONTH

“The boy on the sand lot gets just as big a kick out of a home run as Babe Ruth.”

— Will Rogers

QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?

Call Karen Wiener, MA, MFT, CMC
Manager of Social Services
(888) 994-3863, ext. 2390 or
e-mail karen@wrinstitute.org.