Tips to Care For Elderly at Home

It is preferable for us to age at home in a known familiar environment. However, As we age, we may experience a decline in physical balance and agility, leading to an increased risk of falls. We may not realise this, but even a single fall can lead to serious injuries, significantly impacting our overall well-being and independence. Falls remain one of the leading causes of injury among the elderly, affecting physical health, confidence, and quality of life. Therefore, it is essential to understand the causes of falls and their potential complications, and with some minor adjustments and modifications, it is possible to create a safer place to prevent falls.

What causes falls in older adults

- **Muscle weakness and balance issues.** As individuals age, the functions of the bone, muscle, joint, central nervous, and sensory systems decline, impairing balance and increasing fall risk.
- **Poor eyesight** makes it harder to navigate environments safely.
- **Certain medications** can cause side effects like dizziness or confusion.
- **Unsafe surroundings**. Cluttered pathways, loose rugs, poor lighting, and stairs without railings increase the likelihood of falls among the elderly.
- **Fear of falling.** After experiencing a fall, the fear of falling again can lead to decreased physical activity, which weakens muscles and further increases fall risk.

Here are some key points to consider:

- **Install handrails** on the sides of staircases for stability and support. Ramps at the entrance steps can provide ease of entry. While climbing keep your hand dry and free of any objects. Mark level change with coloured stripes.
- **Bathroom safety**: Keep non-slip mats near the shower or bathtub to reduce the risk of slipping. Install sidebars adjacent to the toilet and in shower areas. Raised toilet seats help people with bending issues. Use plastic chairs while bathing.
- **Easy access:** Keep frequently used items in easily reachable places to reduce stretching or bending. Label cabinets with names of contents.
- **Take support:** Use assistive devices like walkers, and canes, to support stability. Wear well-fitting, non-slip footwear and avoid walking in socks or barefoot, which can increase the risk of slipping.

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- **Ensure proper lighting** and easy-to-reach switches or lamps. Keep night lamps on all night. Remove obstacles such as foot mats, carpets, and extra furniture from common pathways to avoid tripping
- **Save ICE (**In Case of Emergency) numbers, in phones, and display them in prominent places like the refrigerator, side of television, etc. Have wireless call bells for emergency use.
- **Handy medications:** Organize medicines in a pill box to ensure the correct dosage and timing. Keep the First-Aid kit readily accessible.

Creating a safe home environment for elderly individuals involves careful planning and implementation of safety measures. By addressing both personal and environmental factors, caregivers can significantly reduce the risk of accidents, allowing seniors to maintain their independence while living safely at home. Regular assessments of the living space can help identify potential hazards and ensure that necessary modifications are made promptly

To know more:

- How to care for my elderly parents from afar
- Addressing common Health issues among the Elderly
- Management of Medicines for the Elderly