

On Your Own Two Feet

*Exploring Ways to Reduce
Your Risk of Falling*



Amanda Distefano – Program Coordinator
Washington County Health Department



Falls Happen!

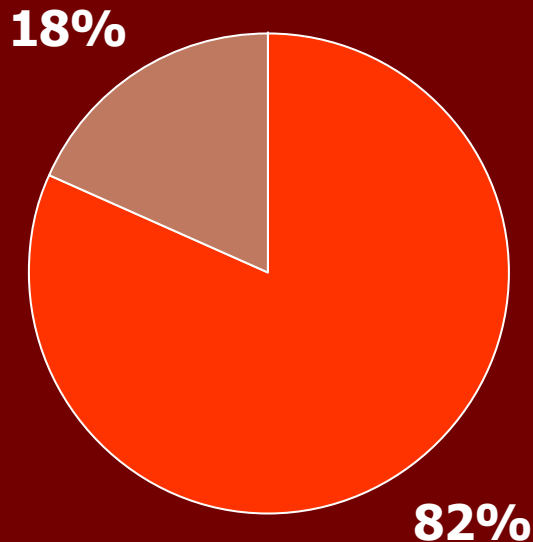


Know the Facts...

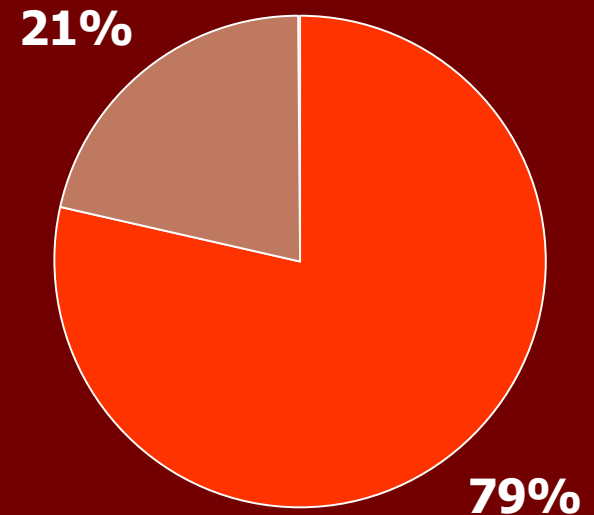
Emergency Dept. Visits



Maryland



Washington County



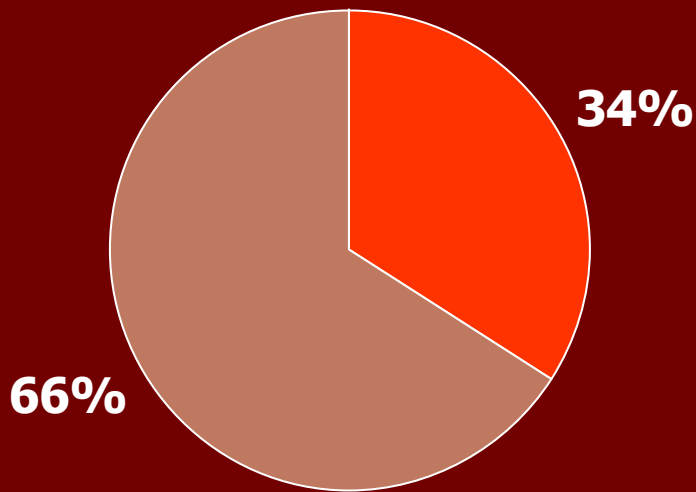
In the State of Maryland 18%* and
In Washington County 21%* of All Fall Related Emergency
Department Visits are made by adults 65 years old or older.



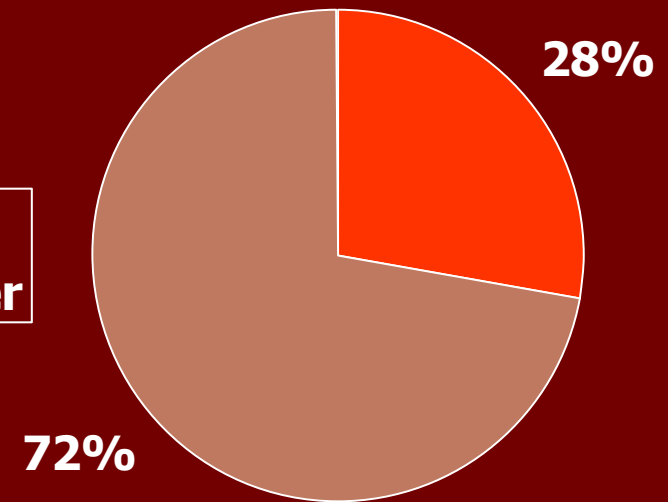
Know the Facts...

Hospitalization as result of a fall

Maryland



Washington County

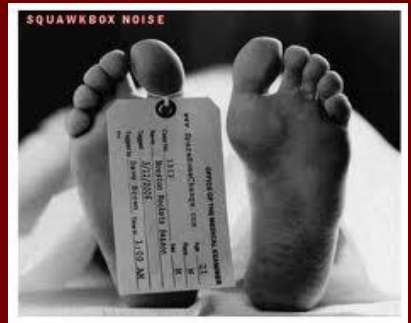


In the State of Maryland 66%* and
In Washington County 72%* of All Fall Related
Hospitalizations are for adults 65 years old or older.

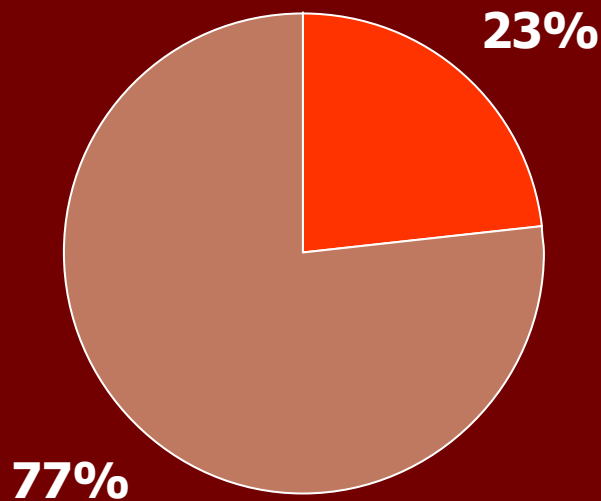
* DHMH—Injuries in Maryland 2011 Statistical Report

Know the Facts...

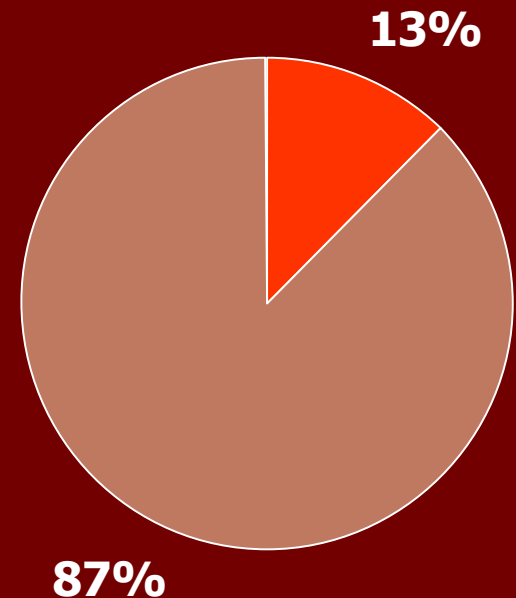
Fall Related Deaths



Maryland



Washington County



Under 65
65 & Older

In the State of Maryland 77%* and
In Washington County 87%* of All Deaths as a result
of a fall are adults 65 years old or older.

* DHMH—Injuries in Maryland 2011 Statistical Report

What Does This Mean For You?



What is the Cost of Falling?

- Maryland - Charges for fall related Emergency Department visits in 2013 - \$48,768,154
- Maryland – Charges for fall related hospitalizations in 2013 - \$239,882,000
- Maryland – Average length of stay for fall related hospitalization in 2013 – 5 days
- In 2013, direct medical costs of falls totaled a little over ***\$30 billion***



Epidemiology of the Problem

- Falls are the leading cause of injury-related Emergency Department visits in Maryland and Washington County
- Somewhere between one-third and one-half of the community-dwelling older adults acknowledge fear of falling
- Fear of falling is associated with depression, decreased mobility and social activity, increased frailty, and increased risk for falls as a result of de-conditioning.

What Do We Know About Falls?

- One out of three people over 65 fall each year
- Most falls do not result in serious injury
- Falls are not a part of the normal aging process
- A majority of falls occur during routine activities
- Falls are not caused by just one issue, it is a combination of things coming together
- Most falls are preventable



Why Do Falls Occur?

Group Activity—Brainstorm

Why Do Falls Occur?

- Two Different Categories of Risks
 - Physical (within the individual)
 - Environmental (outside the individual)

Why Do Falls Occur?

Physical

- Decreased visual acuity
- Impaired balance and gait
- Slowed reaction times
- Certain classes of drugs such as sedatives and hypnotics
- Failing to use prescribed assistive devices as recommended
- Climbing on objects to reach items on high shelves
- Hurrying to answer the telephone or doorbell



Why Do Falls Occur?

Physical—Continued

- Failing to exercise regularly
- Attempting to carry heavy objects or too many objects at one time
- Hesitating to bring concerns about falls to the attention of the health care provider
- Failure to request assistance with activities of daily living



Why Do Falls Occur?

Environmental

- Highly polished floors
- Wet ground surface
- Poor lighting
- Lack of handrails on stairs
- Cluttered spaces
- Loose or thick pile rugs
- Irregular ground surfaces



Why Do Falls Occur?

Environmental—continued

- Absence of grab bars near the toilet and in the shower
- Poorly planned storage shelves
- Exposed phone cords
- Improper shoes
- Unstable rolling chairs
- Low and overly soft beds and chairs
- Transferring in and out of beds and chairs



What can you do to reduce the risk of falling?

- Ask the doctor or pharmacist to review all medications both over the counter and prescribed
- See a health care provider regularly for chronic conditions such as Parkinson's Disease, history of stroke, arthritis and visual impairment
- See an eye doctor for a vision check at least once a year
- Remove tripping hazards such as throw rugs and clutter in walkways



What can you do to reduce the risk of falling?

- Use non-slip mats in the bathtub and on shower floors
- Have grab bars put next to the toilet and in the tub or shower
- Have handrails put in on both sides of stairways
- Improve lighting throughout the home
- Increase lower body strength and improve balance through regular physical activity



Staying Active and Independent

■ Benefits of Exercise

- Improve balance skills and flexibility
- Strengthen muscles
- Improve coordination
- Improve overall conditioning
- Increased feeling of emotional wellbeing
- Research shows that everyone can grow stronger through increased activity
- Improve blood pressure regulation

Staying Active and Independent

- Reasons People Don't Exercise
 - Belief that inactivity is a natural part of aging
 - Belief that we cannot slow the weakening of bones and muscles through exercise
 - Belief that all exercise is harmful for older people
 - Feeling embarrassed to exercise "at my age"
 - Time constraints
 - Overprotective relatives and friends

Exercise Programs for Older Adults



Think Safety.....



Falls CAN be prevented!

Who Is Ultimately Responsible For Reducing Your Risk of Falling?



You Are!

Your ideas are the best ideas.