

**How to Get Up – Tip Sheet** - by Cassidy Camino, RN

When an older adult falls, they may not be able to get up on their own resulting in laying on the floor for a period of time. In this situation, serious complications can develop such as dehydration, hypothermia, pressure sores and pneumonia.

It is important to know what to do after a fall. Below are some steps to help.

- 1) Breathe. Try to stay as calm as possible. Remain still for a few moments and take some deep breaths to try and relax.
- 2) Take a few moments to decide if you are hurt. Getting up too quickly could make an injury worse. Try and move your arms and legs slightly to note any areas of pain.

**If you are NOT Injured**

- 3) If you are not injured, try to roll onto your side from your back by rotating from the head down. At this point, take a moment to rest.
- 4) Push up to your hands and knees in a crawling position and crawl toward a sturdy piece of furniture, such as a chair. Rest as needed.
- 5) Place one hand at a time onto the chair and bring your strongest leg up to a 90-degree angle placing your foot flat on the ground. The other leg will remain in a kneeling position. Push up using your arms and your legs using the support of the chair.
- 6) Slowly turn around and sit in the chair for a few moments to catch your breath before doing anything else.

**If you ARE Injured**

- 3) If you are injured from the fall and unable to get up, take a few moments to determine where the pain is located.
- 4) If you have an emergency call system, such as an emergency button on a bracelet or watch, push the button to elicit help. If you are close to a phone, you can use it to call 911.
- 5) While waiting for help, try to find something that can be used as a pillow and blanket to keep yourself as comfortable as possible.
- 6) If you don't have access to an emergency call system or phone, yell and make noise as you can to get the attention of family, neighbors, etc.

If you believe that you might not be able to get up on your own after a fall, an emergency call system would be highly beneficial. Having these systems enable you to push a button on a special necklace or bracelet to call for help. Some smartwatches also have this feature. Contact your physician for more information.

After a fall without significant injury, it is common for people to not tell their physician about these incidents. Sometimes, there are underlying causes that could be addressed with treatment or correction, so it's best to keep your physician in the loop. It may also help to learn more about preventing falls because older adults who've fallen once are at greater risk of falling again in the future.