



# *Healthy* DIRECTIONS

HEALTH EDUCATION INFORMATION FROM JOHNS HOPKINS BAYVIEW MEDICAL CENTER

## **Footwear and falls**

Whether it's from a medical condition or the shoes you wear, foot problems make walking difficult and make you more susceptible to falling.

More than 11 million seniors – one out of every three people age 65 or older – have foot problems. This is twice the rate of the total adult population with foot problems – 43 million Americans or one out of every six adults.

The majority of those affected are women. Studies show that 90 percent of females wear shoes that are too small for their feet.

Everyone should select shoes for comfort, not the latest fashion. Foot comfort is essential to maintaining your stability mobility and safety.

The American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons has developed foot and shoe wear guidelines to help seniors prevent falls:

- Wear properly fitting, sturdy shoes that provide support. Be sure your shoes have a nonskid sole.
- Avoid high heels and shoes with smooth, slick soles. If you have a comfortable shoe that has a slippery sole, ask a shoe repair shop to add textured strips to the sole.
- Have your feet measured every time you purchase shoes. Your current shoe size is not the same as it was 10 years ago.
- Do not wear shoes that have extra-thick soles.
- Shoes with laces are safer than slip-ons, but keep the laces tied. Loose or long laces can cause you to fall. People unable to tie laces can select footwear with Velcro fasteners.

- Replace slippers that have stretched out of shape and are too loose.
- If you have trouble putting on your shoes, use a long-handled shoehorn.
- Never walk in your stocking feet.
- Wear slippers with non-slip soles.
- Keep toenails trimmed.
- Women who cannot find athletic shoes that are wide enough for proper fit should shop in the men's shoe department: shoe manufacturers make men's shoes wider than women's shoes.

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