

## Trauma in the Elderly...

Trauma in the elderly is the sixth leading cause of death in persons 65 years and older. Most of these fatal injuries are related to falls. About 25 percent of people ages 65 to 74 will suffer from a fall each year. After the age of 75, the rate increases to 33 percent. When older people are hospitalized due to a fall, almost half are discharged to a nursing home.

Falls cause problems at any age, but in older individuals, falls become more serious. Not only are falls the most common cause of injury in older persons, they account for 84 percent of all hip fractures. More than half of all fatal falls involve persons 75 years of age and older.

An older person's quality of life is greatly impacted following an injury. The recovery is longer and the need for long-term care increases. Older persons are most susceptible to complications from injuries, which result in longer and more costly rehabilitation and higher mortality rates. This plays a significant role in the fact that the elderly account for one-third of the health care resources in trauma care.

**According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, fall-related medical expenses cost Americans more than \$20 billion each year.**

**Watch  
Your  
Step!**

**Being Safe and Sensible at Home**

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# A Trauma Prevention Program for Older Persons in Pennsylvania



Presented by:

**The American Trauma Society**  
Pennsylvania Division

DEPARTMENT OF  
**HEALTH**

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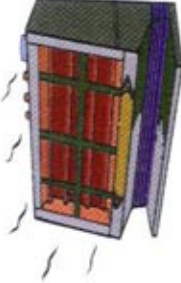

Being Safe and Sensible at Home



"Watch Your Step" is a training program geared towards older persons living alone, in senior citizen centers or within a retirement community.

The program includes the following:

- ▶ Introduction
- ▶ Presentation Method
- ▶ Implementation
- ▶ Contact Information for Pennsylvania's Area Agencies on Aging
- ▶ References
- ▶ Resources
- ▶ PowerPoint© Presentation
- ▶ Script Outline

## PowerPoint© topics include:

- ▶ **Kitchen Safety**
  - correct use of burners
  - proper handling of grease fires
  - keeping an uncluttered countertop
- ▶ **Living Room Safety**
  - proper handling of cords
  - using extension cords
  - using space heaters
- ▶ **Bedroom Safety**
  - using bedside lamps
  - using electric blankets
  - checking the smoke alarm

- ▶ **Bathroom Safety**
  - using bath mats
  - using hand holds/grips
  - checking the hot water heater
- ▶ **Halls, Doorways and Exits**
  - using handrails
  - taping down rugs
  - using slip-resistant strips on stairs
- ▶ **Outside the Home**
  - driving
  - keeping an uncluttered yard
  - dealing with icy sidewalks
  - exercising
  - checking in on one another