

# Franciscan Skemp

Mayo Health System

**Galesville Clinic**



## **Common Concerns** *by Chris Petersen*

### **FALLS: HOW TO LOWER YOUR RISK**

#### **Who is at high risk of falling?**

Anyone can fall, although the risk is higher in older people. This increased risk of falling may be the result of changes that come with aging, and certain medical conditions, such as arthritis, cataracts, faulty balance, illness, medications or hip problems. These falls can sometimes result in death.

#### **What can I do to lower my risk of falling?**

Most falls occur in the home. The best self-care is to develop a plan that reduces risk and prevents injury in the first place. Here are some tips to prevent fall:

- **Have your vision and hearing checked regularly.**  
If either is impaired, you lose important cues that help you maintain balance.
- **Exercise regularly.**  
Exercise improves your strength, muscle tone and coordination. This not only helps prevent falls but also reduces the severity of the injury if you do fall.
- **Be wary of drugs.**  
Ask your doctor about the drugs you take. Some drugs may affect balance and coordination.
- **Avoid alcohol.**  
Even a little alcohol can cause falls, especially if your balance and reflexes are already impaired.

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- **Get up slowly.**

A momentary decrease in blood pressure, due to drugs or aging, can cause dizziness if you stand up too quickly.

- **Maintain balance and footing.**

If you feel dizzy, use a cane or walker. Wear sturdy, low-heeled shoes with wide, nonskid soles.

- **Eliminate loose rugs or mats.**

- **Install adequate lighting.**

Make sure you have good lighting in your home, use night-lights in your bedroom, hallways, stairs and bathrooms.

- **Put hand rails in your bathroom for bath, shower and toilet use.**

- **Have rails on both sides of your stairs for support.**

- **In the kitchen, make sure items are within easy reach. Don't store too high or too low.**

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**Galesville**

*is a great  
place to live.*

*Franciscan Skemp Healthcare helps to make it better.*

Katy Anthony, PA-C, Family Medicine

Dennis Ohlrogge, MD, Family Medicine

Now seeing patients on alternating Thursday mornings

Chris Petersen, PA-C, Family Medicine

Mary Olstad-Hanson, MSSW, CICSW, Behavioral Health

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**Franciscan Skemp**

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We offer complete family  
care, specialty care  
and a partnership  
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