

# CLINIC CONVERSATIONS



WE ARE YOUR  
HEALTHCARE TEAM

MIDWESTERN UNIVERSITY CLINICS NEWSLETTER

Winter 2017



## Fall Prevention

Falls are the leading cause of fatal and nonfatal injuries among adults aged 65 years and older. They can cause head injuries, sprains and strains, bruises, broken bones, torn muscles, and hospitalizations. Just the fear of falling may impact many people's lives.

**Falls can be caused by a variety of conditions or contributing factors, including:**

- Weakness in core and leg muscles
- Poor sensation in feet and ankles
- Walking difficulties
- Poor footwear
- Home hazards
- Medications that make you sleepy or dizzy
- Poor vision
- Rushing to the bathroom.

If you are concerned about any of these risks, talk to your primary care physician and ask for a "falls assessment". Falls are largely preventable and healthcare providers such as physical and occupational therapists can play a role in reducing your risks. They can also help rehabilitate those who have fallen.

A trained physical or occupational therapist can work with you to help restore posture, balance, improve gait, and gain strength. Don't wait until you fall to address this important issue.

*References: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Cochrane Database System*

## Traumatic Brain Injury

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) can occur when a violent blow or bump to the head is severe enough to cause the brain tissue to swell, tear, or bruise. Everyone is at risk of a TBI, especially during the winter months when snowy and icy conditions, as well as outdoor sports such as hockey, sledding, skiing, and snowboarding, increase the chances of falls or head injuries. Individuals with neurological problems, such as Parkinson's disease or dementia, are at an even greater risk of fall-related brain injuries.

**Some common symptoms associated with TBI are:**

- Confusion
- Blurred vision
- Sleep problems
- Slurred speech
- Memory loss
- Fatigue
- Reduced attention and concentration.



While preventing head injuries is key, if an injury occurs, a qualified speech-language pathologist can assist with the evaluation and treatment of a TBI. They are also able to work with clients to improve cognitive function and communication. In addition, a speech-language pathologist can assist individuals diagnosed with a TBI to develop strategies and self-advocacy techniques to improve the overall quality of life.

*References: The ASHA Leader and Neurology Now*



# MIDWESTERN UNIVERSITY CLINICAL CAMPUS

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