Geriatric Syndromes TIP Sheet

The lifespan of older adults is increasing due to advancements in medical care. As we age, it becomes more likely to develop health problems. These health problems, also known as geriatric syndromes, are caused by multiple factors and affect multiple organ systems. There are many different treatments that can be used to help older adults maintain independence and quality of life.

Falls

- According to the CDC, one out of four people fall each year
- Immediately after a fall, see a healthcare provider to ensure injuries and underlying acute illnesses are identified and treated
- Physical therapy and exercise are used to increase balance and strength
- Remove tripping hazards in the home (i.e., rugs and cords)

Incontinence

- According to the CDC, more than half of older adults suffer from incontinence
- Multiple treatments are available including special devices, exercise, medications, and surgery
- This is not a normal part of aging; talk to a healthcare provider to determine the cause and best treatment option

Sleep problems

- According to the Journal of the American Geriatric Society, as many as 50% of older adults report trouble sleeping
- Multiple treatments are available including medications
- Talk to a healthcare provider to identify the cause to determine the best management strategy
Delirium

• In the hospital, there are specific protocols in place to prevent this
• Caregivers can reduce the risk of delirium by orienting the patient while in the hospital and using eyeglasses/hearing aids if required
• This is considered a medical emergency, any acute change in cognition should be reported to a healthcare provider

Dementia

• If you or a loved one are experiencing memory problems, talk to a healthcare provider to begin testing and rule out other health conditions that may be causing the symptoms
• There are medications available to help slow down the progression of the disease

Osteoporosis

• Bone health can be protected by increasing calcium and vitamin D intake, strength training exercises, and weight-bearing exercises
• Medications are also available to treat thinning bones
• If you are concerned about thinning bones, ask a healthcare provider about a bone density test