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New Research Reveals Podiatric Services Help Prevent Falls for the Elderly & At-Risk Populations

Fall-Related Injuries in New York are on the Rise, The New York State Podiatric Medical Association (NYSPMA) Raises Awareness with Steps for Reducing Falls

NEW YORK (September 6, 2018) – Falls in older adults (aged 65 and older) are the leading cause of injury deaths, hospitalizations, and emergency department visits in New York State. Every day, two older New Yorkers die, 140 are hospitalized, and 223 are seen in emergency departments due to falls, according to the [New York State Department of Health \(NYSDOH\)](#) statistics. Among those 65 and older who are hospitalized due to falls, 60 percent end up in a nursing home or rehabilitation center, 11 percent suffer a traumatic brain injury, and 27 percent experience a hip fracture.

The [NYSDOH also reports](#) that in New York alone, falls account for approximately \$1.7 billion in hospitalization charges and \$145.3 million in outpatient emergency department charges annually. With fall-related injuries on the rise, fall prevention has become a priority in the [New York State Prevention Agenda](#).

Podiatrists Play a Critical Role in Fall Prevention.

Understanding that falls are a predictable and preventable problem, podiatrists can help reduce the risk of falls by treating the foot, providing patient education, promoting health, and encouraging mobility. That's why in 2017, the [New York State Podiatric Medical Association \(NSYPMA\)](#) – the largest statewide component of the [American Podiatric Medical Association \(APMA\)](#) – commissioned a study by [Navigant Consulting](#) to advocate for the value of podiatric services to meet New York's healthcare goals.

The study focused on podiatric interventions as a key component to treating diseases that improve the quality of life as well as reduce unnecessary health care costs. In regards to fall prevention, a literature review showed a **36 percent reduction of falls** over a 12-month period for individuals with an increased risk of falls who are receiving podiatric interventions. Additionally, routine assessment and management of foot issues reduces the risk of falls, leading to improved health and decreased frailty among the aging.

“Podiatrists are trained to identify patients who are at risk for falls, especially as one of the main causes involve factors such as muscle weakness, arthritis, and a decline in foot strength and flexibility,” says Brooklyn-based Podiatrist and NYSPMA President Dr. Paul Liswood, DPM. “The NYSPMA study shows that the inclusion of comprehensive podiatric services in value based payment arrangements will reduce the prevalence of falls among at-risk New Yorks and help to improve their quality of life.”

September 22 – 28 is Falls Prevention Awareness Week.

Many falls are preventable. The NYSPMA offers these stay-safe tips:

- **Find a good balance and exercise program.** A low-impact exercise program will help reduce the risk of falls by improving strength, balance, coordination, and flexibility.
- **Wear sensible shoes.** Wear shoes that are not just comfortable, but also provide firm a grip on flooring surfaces. Trade high heels, floppy slippers, and sandals for a well-cushioned athletic or running shoe with a broad outsole.
- **Ensure that the shoe fits properly.** Ill-fitting shoes can cause pain if they are too small. If they are too large, the chance of tripping is increased due to the amount of foot motion that occurs within the shoe.
- **Check your meds.** Review medications regularly with a medical professional or pharmacist and only take them as prescribed since side effects can increase the risk of falling.
- **Keep your home safe.** Remove tripping hazards, increase lighting, make stairs safe by fixing loose handrails and ensuring the carpet is firmly attached to every step, and install grab bars in key areas.

Talk to your podiatrist to take steps to create a fall risk management treatment plan to lead a safe and active life. For more information visit www.nyfoothealth.com and follow on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

Additional details from the NYSPMA study along with key findings of three additional chronic conditions, including diabetes, obesity, and substance abuse/chronic back pain, were published in the white paper, “Podiatric Services Deliver Value and Improved Health Outcomes.” The complete white paper is available upon request.

About NYSPMA:

Established in 1895, the New York State Podiatric Medical Association (NYSPMA) is the first organization of its kind in America. NYSPMA is the largest statewide component of the American Podiatric Medical Association (APMA) and its affiliated national network of certifying boards and professional colleges. The NYSPMA and its more than 1,100 doctors of podiatric medicine adhere to a code of strict ethical standards and participate in numerous programs to benefit patients, the podiatric profession, and the general public. For more information, visit www.nyspma.org.

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