



The “Help Seniors Live Better, Longer: Prevent Brain Injury” Initiative

Traumatic brain injury, or TBI, is a health concern particularly for older adults. People 75 years of age and older have the highest rates of TBI-related hospitalizations and death. Falls are the leading cause of TBI. Nearly 85% of deaths caused by falls in 2004 were among people in this age group.

However, **falls can be prevented**. Family members and other caregivers of older adults can help protect their loved ones' health and independence by reducing their risk for falls, recognizing signs of TBI after a fall occurs, and taking the appropriate steps when signs of TBI are observed.

What is the “Help Seniors Live Better, Longer: Prevent Brain Injury” Communication Initiative?

To address the TBI public health problem, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) developed “Help Seniors Live Better, Longer: Prevent Brain Injury.” This nationwide communication initiative is designed to raise awareness among adult children and other caregivers of older adults about ways to prevent, recognize, and respond to fall-related TBI in adults age 75 and older. CDC will launch the initiative in March 2008 during Brain Injury Awareness Month.

Who Are the Audiences for this Initiative?

Primary audience: family members and others who are caregivers of older adults

- Key messages for this audience:
 - TBI is a particular health concern for older adults because they have the highest rates of TBI-related hospitalizations and death.
 - Falls are the leading cause of TBI.
 - Falls are not an inevitable part of aging. You can take steps to reduce the older adult's risk for falling.
 - Become familiar with the signs and symptoms of TBI so you can recognize them in an older adult and respond quickly and appropriately.

Secondary audience: adults age 75 and older

- Key messages for this audience:
 - TBI is a serious health concern for people your age.
 - Falls are the leading cause of TBI.
 - Falls are not an inevitable part of aging. There are steps you can take to reduce your risk for falling.

Tertiary Audiences:

1. National, state, and local organizations and agencies:

- Key Messages for this audience:
 - The information in CDC's “Help Seniors Live Better, Longer: Prevent Brain Injury” publications can help family members and other caregivers of older adults prevent, recognize, and respond to fall-related TBI.
 - Raising caregivers' awareness about TBI in older adults and how to prevent, recognize and respond to it can increase the number of older adults who live longer, high-quality, productive, and independent lives.
 - State and local events and media coverage will help to raise awareness about this important public health problem and how to prevent it.

What Materials Are Available as Part of the Initiative?

The following easy-to-use materials for older adults and their caregivers are available at no cost at: www.cdc.gov/BrainInjuryInSeniors.



Booklet



Tri-fold brochure



Fact Sheet

In addition to the materials shown above, CDC has developed e-cards, a magnet, and posters that will be available for order and distribution.

How Can I Get Involved?

CDC has developed guides designed to help organizations plan and host successful community events and gain media coverage as a way to raise awareness about this serious public health issue.

- The *Event Planning Guide* includes suggestions and tools for planning and organizing a community event, enlisting partners, promoting, and evaluating an event.
- The *Media Access Guide* includes tips and tools, such as press release and media advisory templates, and talking points to help you work with your local media to get valuable news coverage of activities you supporting this national awareness effort.

Activities to support the initiative might include:

- Conducting community outreach by holding an event or media activity in collaboration with local nonprofit, faith-based, and state and local agencies.
- Disseminating TBI messages through a newsletter, a website or at organizational meetings.
- Providing “Help Seniors Live Better, Longer: Prevent Brain Injury” brochures and displaying posters at appropriate venues.
- Arranging for an influential speaker, such as the mayor, city councilmen/alderman, or a local radio or television personality, to talk about TBI with news media representatives at television, radio, and print outlets.
- Promoting the TBI prevention initiative by sending letters to affiliates; placing announcements in newsletters and trade publications; making presentations about TBI at meetings, conferences, workshops, and training sessions; and posting information on the Internet and establishing links to the initiative’s website and educational materials.

What Else is Available from CDC?

CDC has also developed the “Preventing Falls: What Works: A CDC Compendium of Effective Community-based Fall Prevention Interventions from Around the World” and the “Preventing Falls: How to Develop Community-based Fall Prevention Programs” booklets. These booklets will be available March 2008 and will provide detailed information about effective interventions and provide guidelines on fall prevention program planning, development, implementation, and evaluation.

Participating Organizations for the “Help Seniors Live Better, Longer: Prevent Brain Injury” Initiative

Administration on Aging	American Geriatrics Society and AGS Foundation for Health and Aging
American Occupational Therapy Association	American Society on Aging
Brain Injury Association of America	Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services
Children of Aging Parents	Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center
Department of Veterans Affairs, Office of Geriatrics and Extended Care	Easter Seals
Emergency Nurses Association	Employee Assistance Professionals Association
Family Caregiver Alliance/National Center on Caregiving	Health Resources and Services Administration
Home Safety Council	International Parish Nurse Resource Center
National Adult Day Services Association	National Alliance for Caregiving
National Association of Area Agencies on Aging	National Association of Professional Geriatric Care Managers
National Association of State Head Injury Administrators	National Council on Aging
National Family Caregivers Association	National Institute on Aging
National Safety Council	State and Territorial Injury Prevention Directors Association
Visiting Nurse Associations of America	YMCA of the USA