FALL PREVENTION CHECKLIST

You have a dizziness condition which increases the likelihood that you could sustain a fall. Avoiding falls requires much more than just being careful. Because your balance system is not working properly, you will be relying more than usual on your vision and on your body to prevent falls. Please be aware that falls are most likely to occur in your own home and are most frequent in your own bedroom and bathroom. Please review the following checklist and see if you can improve all of these conditions in your living environment to prevent falls:

- ☐ Use a cane or walker, both inside and outside the house. Never go outside in bad weather without a cane or walker. If using a walker, consider a model that has a built-in seat (Rollator™ or Probasics™). The top of your walker or cane should reach the crease in your wrist when you stand up straight. Adding a special foot to the cane can increase the stability it offers, especially on lawns and uneven surfaces (Sure Foot™ or Able Tripod Cane™).
- ☐ Increase the lighting in your home by using the highest watt bulbs allowed for the light fixtures. Frosted bulbs will reduce glare.
- ☐ Buy and place night lights liberally throughout the house so you will never be stumbling through the dark looking for a light switch.
- ☐ Always turn on the lights before walking in a dark room, if possible, even if you are only going in for a moment.
- ☐ Buy small key chain flashlights and put them on all your keys so that you are never caught without light in a parking lot or other dark area.
- ☐ Make sure the stairs are well lit. Ideally, there would be a light switch at both the top and the bottom. If necessary, mark the edges of the steps with non-skid contrasting strips.
- ☐ Falls frequently occur on stairs because of handrails which are not present or difficult to grab. Have sturdy handrails that run the full length of both sides of all the stairways. These should extend slightly beyond the first and last step. Use the handrails!
- ☐ Slip proof the bathtub or shower with a rubber mat or non-slip decals.
- ☐ Install grab bars over the bathtub or on the shower wall. Towel racks can be replaced with sturdier grab bars.
- ☐ Make sure all of your carpets have short dense pile and that the edges lie flat. Tack down loose edges with double sided carpet tape or tacks. Shag carpets are best avoided.
- ☐ Throw rugs can slide and can be hazardous unless they have well fit skid-proof pads which extend all the way to the edges.
- ☐ Keep the walking areas and stairs free of clutter. Telephone and electrical cords

should be kept out of traffic areas with tape or other anchors.

- ☐ Avoid step-stools and ladders, especially if they are old or unsteady.
- ☐ Do not block your vision by carrying bulky packages. More trips with smaller loads are safer.
- ☐ Have your eyes checked to be certain your vision prescription has not changed. Update your glasses if necessary.
- ☐ Give yourself time to adjust your balance when getting up from sitting or lying down. This is best done by sitting for 30 seconds at the side of the bed before getting up to walk.
- ☐ Make sure your shoes fit well and give you a good solid contact with the earth. Spongy running shoes are generally less good than firm soled shoes.
- ☐ Check the height of your bed. If you cannot place your feet flat on the floor when you are sitting on the edge of the bed, your bed is too high. Consider changing to a standard metal frame bed or consider placing the box spring and mattress directly on the floor. By lowering your bed to an appropriate height, you will be at lower risk for falls when climbing into or out of bed.