

After a fall, many factors contribute to recovery time according to WLAD

Paramedics and EMTs at Western Lane Ambulance District (WLAD) respond to numerous emergency medical service calls involving injuries cause by falls. Once the injury occurs, recovery time varies from patient to patient.

For an elderly person, a bad fall can mark the difference between walking, a wheelchair, a hospital stay or rehabilitation center bed.

About one in three people over the age of 65 fall each year, according to the Centers For Disease Control, and about one-third of those will sustain moderate to severe injuries as a result.

What determines the outcome for these injured patients? How quickly will they recover? What options do they have available to them to help them towards their recovery?

One of the initial factors towards predicting recovery

time is whether or not the patient had any pre-existing disabilities or just minor ones, versus those with moderate or severe disabilities prior to their fall.

Those patients with moderate or severe disabilities prior to their fall injuries, will have a more difficult experience with recovery from a fall injury.

That doesn't mean that patients suffering from a moderate to severe disability before injury can't recover; it just makes it more difficult and it may take more time to return to a level of meaningful function.

All told, however, both categories of patients should be careful and sincerely attempt to minimize any chances of falling — and therefore avoiding the fall injury altogether.

After a fall injury, the journey towards recovery and returning to daily activities is an ongoing process.

Recovering from broken bones, for example, is a good time to take steps to prevent further bone loss and additional broken bones.

"Several types of health professionals can help you recover from a fractured bone, or other injuries that have resulted from a fall," said Dr. Horton, PeaceHealth hospitalist. "Physicians who specialize in injury rehabilitation, as well as physical therapists and occupational therapists, are very helpful in patient recovery techniques."

"They use a variety of methods to help people recover from fall injuries such as fractures

and any other related fall injuries."

Physical therapists treat pain and discomfort in many ways. These often include exercises to keep the joint moving, as well as application of ice and heat. Such treatments are especially important in relieving the muscle spasms and pain that often come with broken bones and other related fall injuries.

In addition, a supervised program of exercises to strengthen the affected injury site can help decrease pain and improve function.

An occupational therapist can teach the patient techniques that will help them move safely

during daily activities to reduce pain and prevent future falls.

It is vital for recovering patients to work with their treatment teams to decide which recovery treatment programs are most effective.

Florence area home health

nursing assistance may also be effective in reaching treatment goals. If the recovery is more difficult, and the patient already had moderate to severe disabilities prior to the fall, then maybe a skilled nursing facility may be the most viable option.

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