



Georgia Department of Public Health

Fall Prevention: The Public Health Perspective

Elizabeth Head

Program Manager

Injury Prevention Program

Department of Public Health



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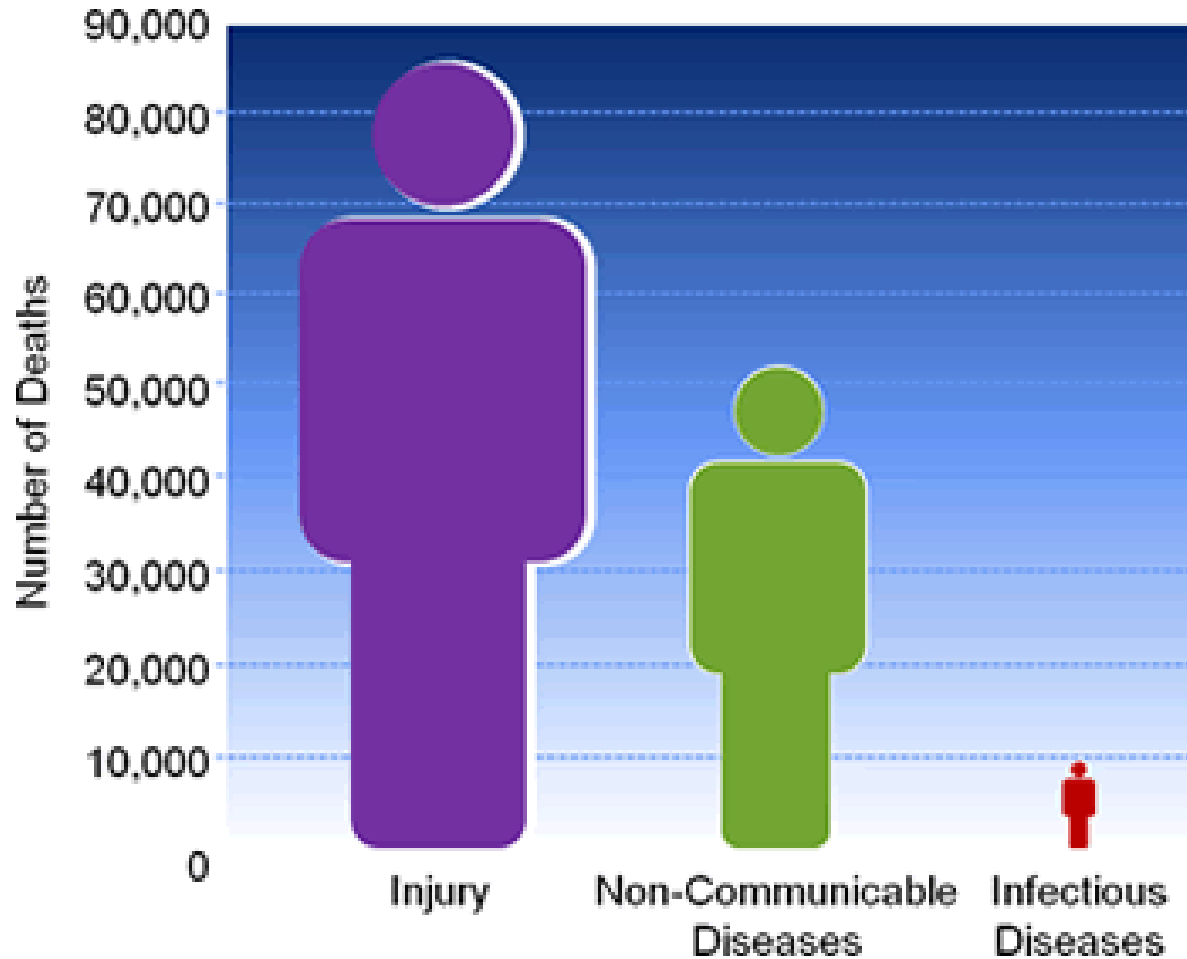
We Protect Lives.

Today's Presentation

- Public Health and Injuries
- Fall Prevention
- Georgia Falls Prevention Coalition



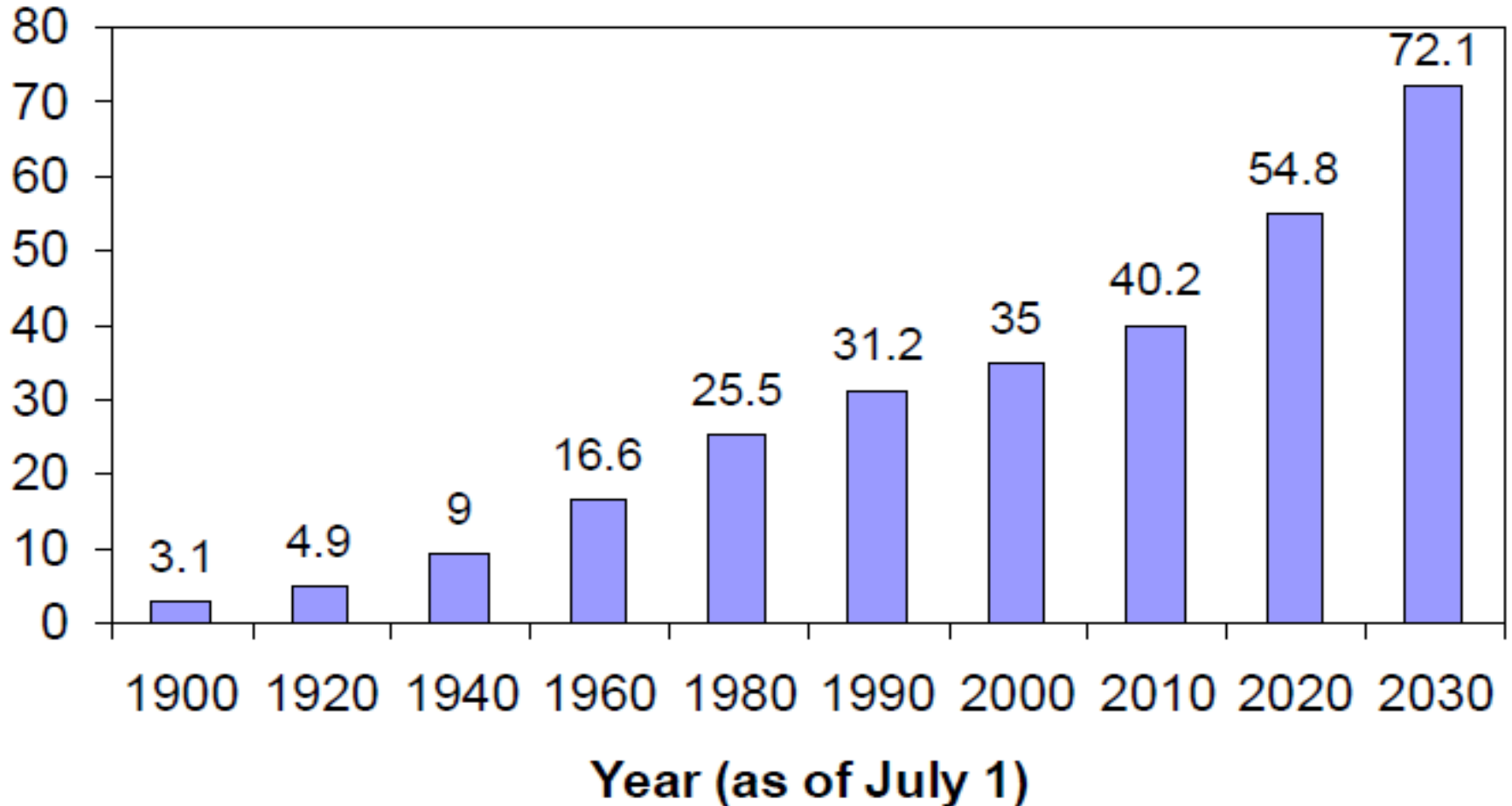
The Problem of Injuries is BIG



Injury Prevention Is.....

- Roadway Safety
 - Older Drivers
 - Child Passenger Safety
 - Rural Roads
- Falls Prevention (across the lifespan)
- Brain & Spinal Cord Injury Awareness & Prevention
- Fire Safety
- Poison Control
- Drowning Prevention
- Suicide Prevention
- Violence Prevention
- Data analysis

US Population Aged 65 and Older



Numbers in millions

Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

WHAT IS AGING?



“There are people who reach the age of 85 in a very good physical and mental condition. There are others who have extensive cognitive difficulties and physical disorders already by the age of 60.”

Physical & Cognitive Impairments

	Normal Aging	Disease Process
Mobility	<ul style="list-style-type: none">↓ROM (head/neck)↓Muscle Strength↓Endurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Arthritis• Parkinson's Disease• Stroke• Diabetes
Vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none">↓Acuity↓Contrast Sensitivity↓Peripheral Vision↓Depth Perception↓Sensitivity to Glare↓Ability to Change Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Macular Degeneration• Cataracts• Glaucoma• Diabetic Retinopathy
Cognition	<ul style="list-style-type: none">↓Age-related memory loss	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dementias (Alzheimer's Disease, etc.)• Stroke• Traumatic Brain Injury

Georgia Falls Prevention Coalition

- History – 2008 collaboration with Division of Aging Services
- Mission Statement – promote collaborative strategies to prevent falls
- Annual Falls Prevention Awareness Day



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What do we know about falls?

- Falls are:
 - Common
 - Predictable
 - Preventable



Falls are not a natural part of aging!

Did you know?

- Every 29 minutes an older adult dies from a fall.
- Research indicates that people who fall 2-3 times are more likely to fall again.
- Less than half of Medicare beneficiaries who fell in the previous year talked to their healthcare provider about it.



Did you Know?

- 1/2 to 2/3 of falls occur around the home
- A majority of falls occur during routine activities
- Falls are usually by a combination of things coming together



TYPES OF FALL RISK FACTORS

Most falls experienced by older adults result from interacting risk factors

- *Physical risk factors*: Changes in your body that increase your risk for a fall
- *Behavioral risk factors*: Things we do or don't do that increase our fall risk
- *Environmental risk factors*: Hazards in our home or community





Photograph courtesy of the UIC Dept. of Occupational Therapy

Reducing Risk

- Make changes in/around your home
- Increase physical activity
- Visit your Doctor



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Screening

Patient Self-Risk Assessment

Check Your Risk for Falling

Please circle "Yes" or "No" for each statement below.			Why it matters
Yes (2)	No (0)	I have fallen in the last year.	People who have fallen once are likely to fall again.
Yes (2)	No (0)	I use or have been advised to use a cane or walker to get around safely.	People who have been advised to use a cane or walker may already be more likely to fall.
Yes (1)	No (0)	Sometimes I feel unsteady when I am walking.	Unsteadiness or needing support while walking are signs of poor balance.
Yes (1)	No (0)	I steady myself by holding onto furniture when walking at home.	This is also a sign of poor balance.
Yes (1)	No (0)	I am worried about falling.	People who are worried about falling are more likely to fall.
Yes (1)	No (0)	I need to push with my hands to stand up from a chair.	This is a sign of weak leg muscles, a major reason for falling.
Yes (1)	No (0)	I have some trouble stepping up onto a curb.	This is also a sign of weak leg muscles.
Yes (1)	No (0)	I often have to rush to the toilet.	Rushing to the bathroom, especially at night, increases your chance of falling.
Yes (1)	No (0)	I have lost some feeling in my feet.	Numbness in your feet can cause stumbles and lead to falls.
Yes (1)	No (0)	I take medicine that sometimes makes me feel light-headed or more tired than usual.	Side effects from medicines can sometimes increase your chance of falling.
Yes (1)	No (0)	I take medicine to help me sleep or improve my mood.	These medicines can sometimes increase your chance of falling.
Yes (1)	No (0)	I often feel sad or depressed.	Symptoms of depression, such as not feeling well or feeling slowed down, are linked to falls.
Total _____		Add up the number of points for each "yes" answer. If you scored 4 points or more, you may be at risk for falling. Discuss this brochure with your doctor.	

This checklist was developed by the Greater Los Angeles VA Geriatric Research Education Clinical Center and affiliates and is a validated fall risk self-assessment tool (Rubenstein et al. *J Safety Res*; 2011;42(6):493-499). Adapted with permission of the authors.


Stay Independent

Falls are the main reason why older people lose their independence.

Are you at risk?



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I'm afraid to say I've fallen
and lose my independence!

It'll be okay. I told them, and they
were great. We checked my medications
and made some changes. They made
sure I was okay.

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Questions to Ask Your Doctor

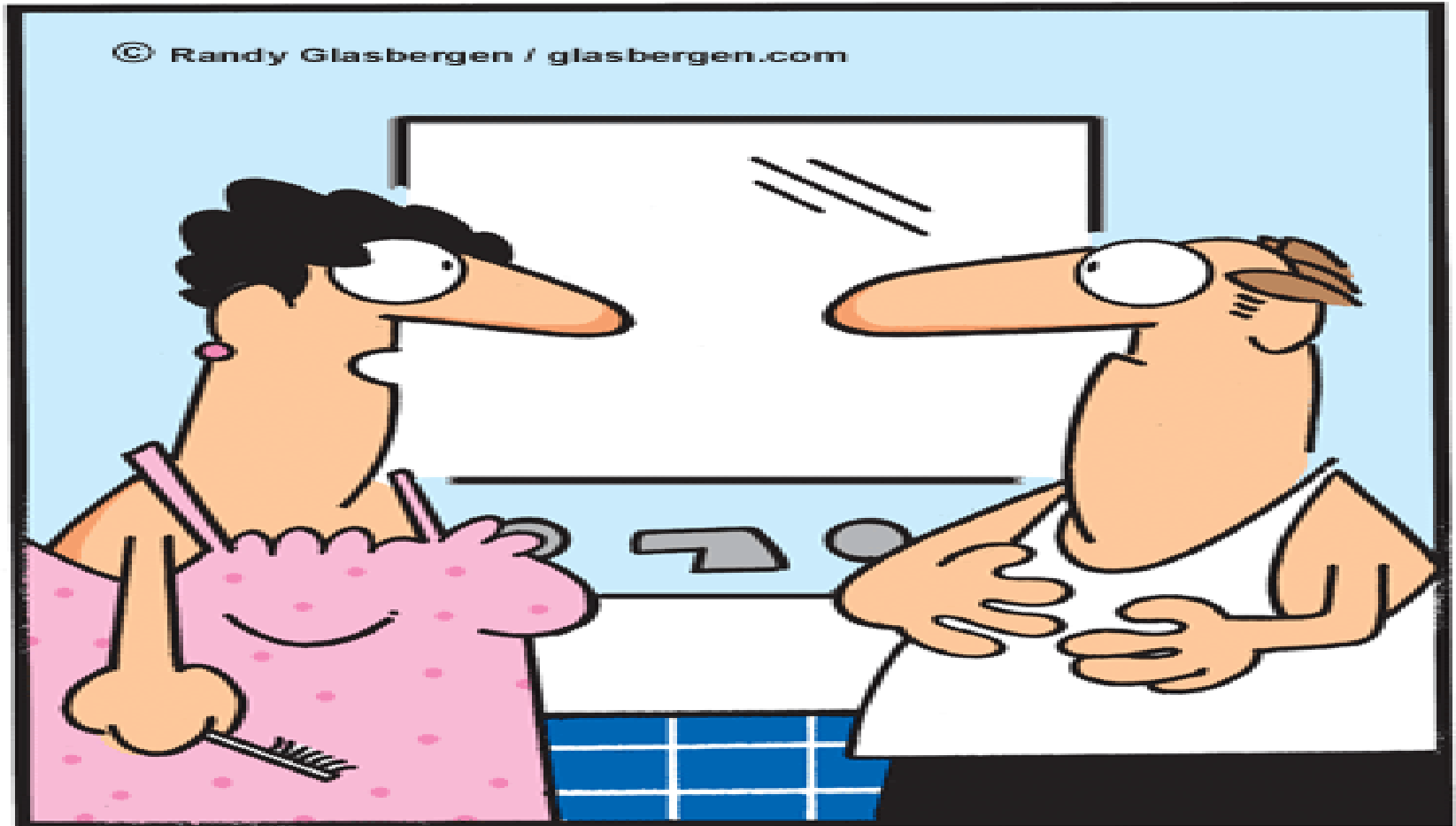
- Can you give me a referral to get my vision checked?
- Can you tell me which of my medications may increase my risk of falling?
- Are there any assistive devices that would be appropriate for me?
- What types of physical activity would be appropriate for me?
- Can you give me a referral to an occupational therapist for a home assessment to reduce my risk of falls at home?
- Are there community resources or classes that could help reduce my risk for falling?

Mind your medications!



- Regular (annual) medication review with your Physician and Pharmacist
- Review ALL possible side effects with your Physician or Nurse when starting a new medication/regimen
- Report any changes in physical or cognitive side effects

It really does keep us young!



“Chasing the ice cream truck does not count as a summer fitness program.”

SUMMARY OF STRATEGIES TO REDUCE FALLS RISK

- Manage chronic illnesses or conditions
- Get an eye exam regularly
- Stay hydrated
- Talk to physicians and pharmacists about medications
- Stay active and exercise regularly
- Find alternatives for potentially risky behaviors
- Identify and eliminate fall hazards in the home

