

Shannon Setchell, RN
Director of VNA Home Health & Hospice

Dear Nurse Shannon



Shannon has over 15 years of nursing experience. Shannon and her team love getting to know their patients and teaching them to help care for themselves.

Dear Nurse Shannon,

My mother-in-law, who at 72 is in good health, is afraid of falling since her friend fell and ended up in a nursing home. She has limited her activity because of this fear. How can I encourage her to safely be more active and resume her normal routine?

—Dutiful Daughter-In-Law

Dear Dutiful Daughter-in-law,

A fear of falling is actually one of the risk factors for falling, so you are right to be concerned. Restricting activity can lead to a decline in physical abilities, putting your mother-in-law at increased risk for a fall.

You could offer to sit in at a doctor appointment to help her discuss her fears with her doctor and have him evaluate her real risk of falling. If your mother-in-law has difficulty walking, the doctor may recommend physical therapy or instruct her on the use of a walker or cane. Working with a physical therapist can help your mother-in-law regain confidence as well as strength.

A home safety check is another good idea. Does your mother-in-law's house have railings along the stairs? Would grab bars in the shower help? How is the lighting throughout the house?

A VNA Home Health nurse and physical therapist can work together with your mother-in-law, her doctor, and the entire family to help ensure she is safe and able to remain at home as long as possible. Give me a call today to discuss this further.

—Shannon



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