

One

for GENTIVA's clinical community

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Gentiva safe strides: helping patients improve their lives by leaps and bounds

Accidental falls are a serious health problem – especially in people over 65. Falls can be dangerous and occasionally lead to further medical problems. While treating the complications of falls is necessary, it's important to find out what's causing them in order to prevent reoccurrences. Gentiva Safe Strides, our comprehensive balance dysfunction program, does just that by allowing clinicians get to the root cause of a patient's fall by applying a multi-system approach to the evaluation and treatment of balance-related disorders.

a whole new methodology

Gentiva's approach to homecare is revolutionary – especially when it comes to treating patients with balance disorders. The traditional treatment for these types of patients is gait training with an assistive device and general strengthening exercises. This approach fails to address the causes of the problem and typically offers no intervention for the vestibular, ocular and somatosensory systems.

"Gentiva Safe Strides is different because we look at every system that affects balance and develop treatments necessary to correct them," said Wanda Hull, Assistant Vice President (AVP), Gentiva Safe Strides. "Plus, it allows patients to stay safely in their homes, whereas historically they would have to find their way to outpatient physical therapy. Since traveling with a balance disorder is difficult, without Gentiva Safe Strides most of them go untreated."

Joy Yoder-Filley, Physical Therapist (PT), Winter Park FL, sees the difference Gentiva Safe Strides makes in the lives of her patients each day. "Most often, falls are simply a result of a patient's illness," she explained. "Gentiva Safe Strides gives me the opportunity to look at a patient from head to toe and provide treatment so that falls are no longer an issue."

fostering independence

Yoder-Filley's patients John and Frances Divine know the benefits of Gentiva Safe Strides firsthand. John was having mobility problems and consulted his doctor for advice. When he diagnosed John with a gait disorder, the physician suggested Gentiva.

After a thorough assessment, Yoder-Filley determined that John had lower extremity weakness, altered posture, deficits in dynamic and static balance and gait deviations. She established a treatment routine that included strengthening exercises, extensive balance skills, posture skills, gait training and instruction in a home exercise program to improve stability and correct the gait abnormality. After only one month, John showed marked improvement

"When I started my routine I wasn't walking well and I lacked the strength to get around," he explained. "But with Gentiva Safe Strides, I was able to receive expert treatment at home that helped me get back to doing the things I like to do in no time."

After seeing the remarkable progress Yoder-Filley was able to make with her husband, Frances Divine signed on with Gentiva Safe Strides to help control her central nervous system dysfunction, lower extremity weakness and vestibular dysfunction. "When I saw Gentiva help my husband gain back his independence, I wanted Gentiva to help me too!" she exclaimed.

informing and educating

As their physical therapist, Yoder-Filley was looking to develop treatment regimens specific to each of their illnesses. "The Divine's had different problems but were looking to integrate a home-based rehabilitation program that looked at the bigger picture and would allow them to improve their lives," she explained.



Joy Yoder-Filley, PT, assists Mr. Divine with his balance exercises.

"They excelled with Gentiva Safe Strides partly because they worked together on their exercises, learned about their illnesses and really encouraged each other's progress."

Patient and family participation plays a large role in recovery. Gentiva is dedicated to educating and empowering patients to take charge of their own health, and our services are guided by the belief that providing patients with more – and better – information leads to greater compliance, quicker recovery, a higher level of satisfaction and reduced incidence of rehospitalization.

In fact, 95% of Gentiva Safe Strides patients show some reduction in risk of falling at discharge. "Our outcomes show that Gentiva Safe Strides is making a significant difference in the geriatric population," said Janene Barber, Senior Clinical Specialist, Gentiva Safe Strides. "When we launch a new branch, we emphasize the collaboration of the operations team, clinical team, physician and family. Everyone pools their knowledge to educate each other."

The Gentiva Safe Strides team works to continuously upgrade clinical components and shares ideas for success on calls and trainings that occur regularly in each market. "I love my work," Yoder-Filley concluded. "I'm able to see my patients exceed their own expectations, and I grow as a clinician every day. I can't ask for more than that."