



**NEWS RELEASE – Area Agency on Aging District 7, Inc.**

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**AAA7 and Shawnee State University “Fall-Free Fridays” Episode  
Features Information About “Home Safety and Bathrooms”**

According to the National Council on Aging, falls remain a leading cause of injury for people aged 65 and older. Falls threaten older adults’ safety and independence and generate enormous economic and personal costs. The good news is that they are preventable and there are proven steps people can take to reduce their risk.

The Area Agency on Aging District 7 (AAA7) recently began featuring “Fall-Free Fridays”, a live, weekly interview with two Shawnee State University (SSU) Occupational Therapy graduate students who provide community education on a falls-related topic and information about falls, risk factors, and helpful prevention tips. The series takes place every Friday at 10:00 am now through December 11<sup>th</sup> on the AAA7 Facebook page.

The last episode on November 6<sup>th</sup> featured the topic “Home Safety - Bathrooms” presented by SSU Master of Occupational Therapy (OT) students Braylie Wells and Jesse Scherer.

Occupational therapists help people do what they want and need in order to be independent and encourage participation in everyday tasks. They provide this support within the community at places like hospitals, schools, nursing homes, and in-home care for all ages from infants to older adults.

Six out of ten falls happen in the home environment with the most common location in the bathroom. The students shared many helpful tips about how to prevent falls in the bathroom including:

- Using mounted grab bars rather than suction grab bars in the shower.
- Replacing glass doors with a shower curtain to provide more room.
- A shower bench can help you in and out of the shower/tub better as it extends over the edge of the tub.
- Having an in-shower anti-slip mat.
- A foot scrubber with a suction cup on the bottom and mounted to the bottom of shower can help you clean your feet without having to bend down, which could create dizziness.
- A hand-held shower head gives you a wider range for the stream of water and can allow you to sit down while showering.
- Automatic dispensers for shampoo and body wash or using pump bottles versus

squeeze bottles.

- Make sure the shower water is not too hot which can make you dizzy.
- Removing the threshold/step going into the shower can help you maintain your balance better.
- If your bathroom is too small to fit your wheelchair, have someone help you with transfers and support.
- Installing grab bars next to the toilet or utilizing a raised toilet seat with bars.
- At the sink, use a mounted movable mirror. This can help with grooming tasks and keep you stable and steady.
- Keep the area free of clutter, especially on the floor.
- Have everything you need within easy reach or use a grab tool for those out of reach.
- A toileting schedule can help eliminate the need to rush to the bathroom.
- Have good lighting inside the bathroom and on the way to the bathroom, especially at night. A motion sensing nightlight can be helpful
- Make sure bathroom rugs are secured to the floor and use non-slip mats. Watch for upturned corners as these can cause falls.
- Clean up wet spots on the floor as these are slippery and can cause a fall.
- Check your energy level before you are in the shower. If you are exhausted, perhaps save taking a shower until you are recharged.

The students also referenced the AARP HomeFit Guide which provides tips, illustrations and suggestions for making your bathroom a fall-free zone. It is available online at <https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/housing/info-2020/homefit-guide.html> or you can also order a printed version through AARP.

If you missed the episode, the broadcast can be viewed by watching a recorded version that is available on the AAA7's Facebook page or at the AAA7's website at [www.aaa7.org](http://www.aaa7.org). At the Home Page, find the "Fall-Free Fridays" promotional ad and then find the "November 6<sup>th</sup>" episode information.

The AAA7 and SSU OT students are also offering Falls Prevention Coaching for anyone who is interested. To learn more about the coaching, please call Hannah Hollingshead at the AAA7 at 1-800-582-7277, extension 247 or e-mail [info@aaa7.org](mailto:info@aaa7.org). The coaching can take place over the phone or through a virtual format.

The next Fall-Free Fridays episode on Friday, November 13<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 am will feature the topic of "Home Safety – Kitchens, Stairs and Laundry". Two new SSU Master of Occupational Therapy students will present on the topic and be available for questions during the live presentation.

For more information about Fall-Free Fridays, call the AAA7 at 1-800-582-7277 or [info@aaa7.org](mailto:info@aaa7.org), or Dr. Christine Raber with the Shawnee State University Occupational Therapy Program at (740) 351-3530 or [craber@shawnee.edu](mailto:craber@shawnee.edu).

Your local Area Agency on Aging District 7, Inc. provides services on a non-discriminatory basis. These services are available to help older adults and those with disabilities live safely and independently in their own homes through services paid for by Medicare, Medicaid, other federal and state resources, as well as private pay. The AAA7's Resource Center is also available to anyone in the community looking for information or assistance with long-term care options. Available Monday through Friday from 8:00 am until 4:30 pm, the Resource Center is a valuable contact for learning more about options and what programs and services are available for assistance.

Those interested in learning more can call toll-free at 1-800-582-7277 (TTY: 711). Here, individuals can speak directly with a specially-trained Resource Specialist who will assist them with information surrounding the programs and services that are available to best serve their needs. The Agency also offers an in-home assessment at no cost for those who are interested in learning more. Information is also available on [www.aaa7.org](http://www.aaa7.org), or the Agency can be contacted through e-mail at [info@aaa7.org](mailto:info@aaa7.org). The Agency also has a Facebook page located at [www.facebook.com/AreaAgencyOnAgingDistrict7](https://www.facebook.com/AreaAgencyOnAgingDistrict7).

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