

Falls Prevention

The AAA7 joined the Ohio Department of Aging last month in recognizing September as Falls Prevention Awareness Month.

Did you know that many falls are preventable? If you are caring for someone, below are six steps from the National Council on Aging that you can take today to help your loved one reduce their risk of a fall.



- 1) Enlist their support in taking simple steps to stay safe. Ask your older loved one if they are concerned about falling, dizziness, or balance. If so, suggest they discuss this with their healthcare provider who can assess their risk and suggest programs or services that could help.
- 2) Discuss their current health conditions. Encourage them to speak openly with their healthcare provider about all of their concerns.
- 3) Ask about their last eye checkup and make sure they have a current prescription and that they are using the glasses as advised by their eye doctor. Also remember that using tint-changing lenses can be hazardous when going from bright sun into darkened buildings and homes.
- 4) Notice if they are holding onto walls, furniture, or someone else when walking, or if they appear to have difficulty walking or arising from a chair. These are signs that they may need to see a physical therapist who can help them improve their balance, strength, and gait through exercise.
- 5) Talk about their medications and encourage them to discuss their concerns with their doctor and pharmacist. Some medications can lead to balance issues and dizziness.
- 6) Do a walk-through safety assessment of the home. There are many simple and inexpensive ways to make a home safer surrounding lighting, stairs, and bathrooms. An Occupational Therapist is a healthcare professional who can assist with ways to make your home safer and ways to help prevent falls.

Falling is not a normal part of aging, and most falls can be prevented. By knowing and managing your risk factors, you can live a full and active life free of the fear of falling. For more information about falls prevention resources in your area, call our Wellness Department at 1-800-582-7277 or e-mail info@aaa7.org.

QUICK QUIZ

Most older people need fewer calories, but their bodies absorb fewer nutrients so they must eat high-nutrient food to maintain good health. They must get more nutrients from less food. Answer True or False to the questions below.

1. *An adjustable ironing board may be used as an over-the-bed table for activities or eating. T F*
2. *Offer more food at the time of day when the person is most hungry or less tired. T F*
3. *If the person in your care needs to swallow three or four times with each bite of food, coughs before, during, or after swallowing, he or she may have a condition called dysphagia. T F*
4. *People with dementia do not have a sweet tooth. T F*
5. *By providing finger foods, a person may eat more independently and will have improved nutrition. T F*
6. *Beans are not a less expensive protein food. T F*
7. *If the person's vision is poor, place the same foods in the same spot on the plate every time. T F*
8. *Too dry or too wet of a mouth can be a side effect of medications. T F*
9. *Difficulty in swallowing can cause food or liquids to be taken into the lungs, which can lead to pneumonia. T F*
10. *For best results at mealtimes, supply easy-to-hold eating utensils. T F*

KEY: 1. T 2. T 3. T 4. F 5. T 6. F 7. T 8. T 9. T 10. T