

# Caregiver Assistance News

*“Caring for You - Caring for Others”*

**Area Agency on Aging District 7, Inc.**

*Serving Adams, Brown, Gallia, Highland, Jackson, Lawrence,  
Pike, Ross, Scioto and Vinton Counties in Ohio*

**www.aaa7.org** **Helping You Age Better!**



**JANUARY 2025**

## **Home Accident Prevention**

Falls among adults age 65 and older are common, costly and preventable. Falls are the leading cause of injury-related death among adults ages 65 and older, and the fall death rate is increasing.

Every second of every day an older adult falls. Every year, more than one in four older adults reported falling and about 41,000 older adults die as a result of a fall—that’s 112 older adults every day.

The causes of falls are known as risk factors. Although no single risk factor causes all falls, the greater the number of risk factors, the greater the probability of a fall and the more likely the fall will threaten personal independence.

Some people believe that falls are a normal part of aging, and as such are not preventable. But many risk factors are preventable. As obvious as it may sound, a lack of knowledge about risk factors and how to prevent them contributes to many falls. While some risk factors for falls, such as heredity and age, cannot be changed, several risk factors can be eliminated or reduced.

*Source: CDC*

### **Why Do Seniors Fall?**

**Failure to exercise regularly** results in poor muscle tone, decreased bone mass, loss of balance and reduced flexibility.

**Impaired vision**, including age-related vision diseases, as well as not wearing glasses that have been prescribed.

**Medications**, like sedatives, anti-depressants, and anti-psychotic drugs, plus taking multiple medications, increase the risk of falling.

**Health conditions**, such as Parkinson’s, Alzheimer’s and arthritis cause weakness in the extremities, poor grip strength, balance disorders and cognitive impairment.

**Hip replacements and other surgeries** leave an older adult weak, in pain and discomfort, and less mobile than they were before the surgery.

**Environmental hazards**, such as poor lighting and loose carpets.



*(continued on Page 2)*

## Home Accident Prevention - contnued from page 1

### Alcohol Affects Safety

Drinking even a small amount of alcohol can lead to dangerous or even deadly situations because it can impair a person's judgment, coordination, and reaction time. This increases the risk of falls.

Alcohol is a factor in about 65% of fatal falls. In seniors especially, too much alcohol can lead to balance problems and falls, which can result in hip or arm fractures and other injuries. Older adults have thinner bones than younger people, so their bones break more easily. Studies show that the rate of various types of fractures in older adults increases with heavy alcohol use.

*Source: National Institute on Aging*

## Focus on Fall Prevention



An 85-year-old needs about three times the amount of light a 15-year-old needs to see the same thing. Contrasting colors play a big part in seeing well. As much as possible, the color of furniture, toilet seats, counters, etc., should be different from the floor color. Remove all hazards that might lead to tripping. Here are some additional tips:

- Clear clutter. Remove debris, loose cords, slippery rugs.
- Don't move furniture unnecessarily. Some frail seniors hold onto furniture or other items while moving through the home. Until canes or walkers are introduced, keep everything securely in place.
- Install safety bars, grab bars or handrails in the shower or bath.
- Put non-slip stickers or tape on the tub/shower floor.
- Use a stool riser seat to make getting on and off the toilet easier.
- Make sure stairs are sturdy with strong hand railings. Keep stairwells well-lit.
- Increase lighting levels in the home to aid vision.
- Tack rugs down to the floor, especially those near the top of or on stairs.
- Remove unnecessary furniture.
- Tape down electrical cords to baseboards or put them behind furniture.
- Insist on non-slip shoes or slippers. Properly fitted, low-heeled, non-slip footwear is much safer than going barefoot. Avoid slippers that can easily slip on and off.
- Use fall mats, cushioned floor pads, 1 or 2 inches thick with beveled edges. They cushion the fall and prevent injuries; they're especially useful in bathrooms or beside the bed, where falls occur most frequently.
- Encourage the use of canes and walkers. Make sure the mobility device you choose is the correct height for the person and has a rubber tip or other traction on the bottom.
- Use motion-sensitive lights that come on when a person enters a room or use night lights in every room.
- Keep frequently used items in easy-to-reach cabinets. Use a grasping tool to get at out-of-reach items, rather than a chair or stepladder. Wipe spills immediately.

*Source: The Comfort of Home: A Complete Guide for Caregivers*

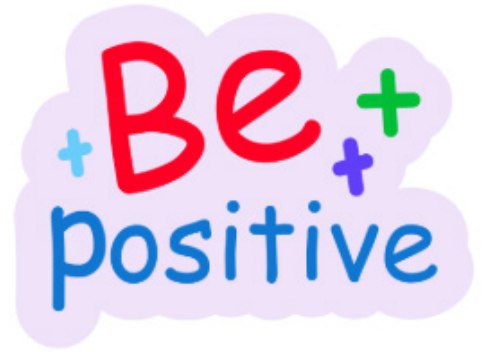
# Taking Care of Yourself

## Be Optimistic

*It is easy to get down when you have many responsibilities that you never expected; however, there are things you can do to create an optimistic life.*

- Do not become attached to negative thoughts.
- Do not live in the past. Let it go.
- Keep your ties with your family and loving, supportive friends.
- Be sure to take the time to reach out to them.
- Make time for fun in your life.
- Make time to be quiet and still for a few minutes each day to seek inner guidance and connect to a higher purpose.

*When you feel stressed, remember two times in your life when you felt inner peace. Where were you? Why were you feeling good? Capture that feeling again.*



## FREE CAREGIVER SUPPORT UPCOMING WEBINARS

through the Area Agency on Aging District 7's partnership with Trualta

17  
JAN

Anonymous Talk:  
Caregiver Exhaustion

2:00 PM - 3:00 PM

Webinar -  
Depression in  
Caregiving

12 NOON - 1:00 PM

24  
JAN

Scan the QR Code to register today!  
Or visit [aaa7.trualta.com](http://aaa7.trualta.com)



## Memory Care

### Falls

*People with Alzheimer's are at particularly high risk of falling. Problems with vision, perception and balance increase as Alzheimer's advances, making the risk of a fall more likely.*



# Safety Tips: Dehydration and Activity

Dehydration is a very common cause of falls in older adults. It can cause dizziness and a drop in blood pressure, which can increase the risk of falling over. If the person in your care experiences incontinence, find ways to build their confidence around having a drink. This could be by encouraging them to drink just little and often throughout the day so that they are less likely to urgently need the toilet after a big drink. To reduce the likelihood of falls at night, stop drinking liquids earlier in the evening.

Regular physical activity is a first line of defense against falls and fractures. Physical activity strengthens muscles and increases flexibility and endurance. In turn, your balance and the way you walk may change, decreasing the chances of a fall. It's important to keep muscles strong. Strengthening muscles in the lower body can improve balance. Work with your doctor or a physical therapist to plan a physical activity program that is right for the person in your care.



---

*Some content in this publication is excerpted from "The Comfort of Home: Caregivers Series". It is for informational use and not health advice. It is not meant to replace medical care but to supplement it. The publisher assumes no liability with respect to the accuracy, completeness or application of information presented, or the reader's misunderstanding of the text.*



## **Area Agency on Aging District 7, Inc.**

1 Acy Avenue • Jackson, OH 45640

Toll-Free Number: (800) 582-7277 • TTY: 711 (Relay Ohio)

Website: [www.aaa7.org](http://www.aaa7.org) • E-Mail: [info@aaa7.org](mailto:info@aaa7.org)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/AreaAgencyOnAgingDistrict7](https://www.facebook.com/AreaAgencyOnAgingDistrict7)

---

*Your local Area Agency on Aging District 7, Inc. serves the following counties in Ohio: Adams, Brown, Gallia, Highland, Jackson, Lawrence, Pike, Ross, Scioto and Vinton. Services are rendered on a non-discriminatory basis. Those interested in learning more about the services provided through the Area Agency on Aging District 7 can call toll-free at 1-800-582-7277. Here, individuals can talk directly with a trained Resource Specialist who will assist them with information surrounding the programs and services that are available to best serve their needs. The Agency can also be reached via email at [info@aaa7.org](mailto:info@aaa7.org).*