

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!**



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Falls Prevention

Safety on Outings

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, even though one-third of adults age 65 and older experience a fall each year, fewer than half of these individuals tell their physician about it. It is essential to notify the doctor about the event. The doctor can make sure that an invisible injury did not result from the fall.

Fear of Falling

Balance can be affected in a person with a disability, such as stroke, and consequently many older adults fear falling. Certain eye and ear disorders may increase risk of falls. If the person in your care has balance problems, dizziness, or a spinning sensation, a therapy subscription from the doctor may help.

To reduce fear of falling, therapists often have people practice getting up from a lying position. This increases confidence that they can get up if they fall. Any amount of exercise helps reduce risk of falls.

Water Therapy

Water therapy is also a safe way for a person with a disability and older adults to exercise because there is no danger of falling. Floating in water allows easy movement and little strain on joints and muscles.

Fall Prevention Measures

- Staying in when it is rainy or icy outside.
- Having regular vision screening check-ups for eyeglasses.
- Using separate reading glasses and other regular glasses if bifocals make it difficult to see the floor.
- Being cautious when walking on wet floors. Look carefully at floor surfaces in public buildings. Many floors are made of highly polished marble or tile that can be very slippery.
- Wearing good foot support when walking. New shoes are slippery and crepe-soled shoes can cause the toe to catch.
- Having foot pain problems corrected and keep toenails trimmed and feet healthy for good balance.
- Avoid gravel or rock yards or paths.
- Stop at curbs and check the height before stepping up or down. Be cautious at curbs that have been cut away to allow access for bikes or wheelchairs. The incline may lead to a fall.
- Consider wearing hip protectors for added protection should you fall.
- Use a shoulder bag or fanny pack to leave your hands free to use hand rails as you go up and down steps and on escalators.
- Use a walker or cane as needed for added stability.



Transferring from Wheelchair to Car

Be sure the car is parked on a level surface without cracks or potholes.

Step One

- Open the passenger door as far as possible.
- Move the left side of the wheelchair as close to the car seat as possible.
- Lock the chair's wheels.
- Move both footrests out of the way.



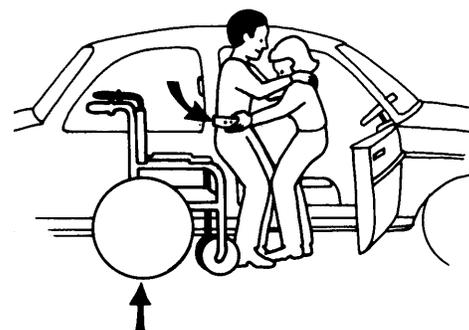
Step Two

- Position yourself facing the person.
- Tell the person what you are going to do.
- Bending your knees and hips, lower yourself to their level.
- By grasping the transfer belt around their waist, help them stand while straightening your hips and knees.
- If their legs are weak, brace their knees with your knees.



Step Three

- While they are standing, turn the person so they can be eased down to sit on the car seat. GUIDE THEIR HEAD so it is not bumped.



Step Four

- Lift their legs into the car by putting your hands under their knees.
- Move the person to face the front.
- Put on their seat belt.
- Close door carefully.

TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF

What is Influenza?

Influenza ("the flu") is a contagious respiratory illness that can be severe and life-threatening, especially for adults 65 years of age and older. The immune system weakens with age, which makes it harder to fight disease. The flu can be dangerous in older adults whether they are healthy or have a chronic health condition such as heart disease or diabetes, which can worsen as a result of the flu.

Getting an annual flu vaccination is one of the things you can do to help maintain your health. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the single best way to help prevent the flu is to get an annual vaccination, which is recommended for everyone six months of age and older, with rare exception.





MANAGING CONCERNS ABOUT FALLS

Did you know that the Area Agency on Aging District 7 provides “A Matter of Balance” falls management classes? This award-winning program is designed to help participants manage falls and increase activity levels.

If you would be interested in having “A Matter of Balance” in a community near you, call our office at 1-800-582-7277, extension 247 or 284.



September is National Falls Prevention Month

Take Control of Your Health: 6 Steps to Prevent a Fall

Every **11 seconds**, an older adult is seen in an emergency department for a fall-related injury.

Many falls are preventable.

Stay safe with these tips!

1

Find a good balance and exercise program

Look to build balance, strength, and flexibility. Contact your local Area Agency on Aging for referrals. Find a program you like and take a friend.

2

Talk to your health care provider

Ask for an assessment of your risk of falling. Share your history of recent falls.

3

Regularly review your medications with your doctor or pharmacist

Make sure side effects aren't increasing your risk of falling. Take medications only as prescribed.

4

Get your vision and hearing checked annually and update your eyeglasses

Your eyes and ears are key to keeping you on your feet.

5

Keep your home safe

Remove tripping hazards, increase lighting, make stairs safe, and install grab bars in key areas.

6

Talk to your family members

Enlist their support in taking simple steps to stay safe. Falls are not just a seniors' issue.

Please Note:
 If the person falls and cannot move or use the injured limb, keep the limb from moving. Do not straighten a deformed arm or leg. Splint an injury in the position you find it. Seek advice from the healthcare provider.



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Safety Tips - *Outdoor Areas*

Safe outdoor areas are important, especially for those who are frail or older and are mobile.

Safety features should include the following:

- Ramps for access on ground that is not level or even.
- A deck with a sturdy railing.
- Alarmed or locked outside doors.
- Enough light to see walkway hazards at night.
- Non-slip step surfaces in good repair.
- Stair handrails fastened to their fittings.
- Cover porch steps with a gritty, weather-proof paint and step edges marked with reflective paint.

