

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!**



MAY 2022

Home Safety and Falls

Falls are serious at any age, but especially for older adults who are more likely to break a bone when they fall. Falls are the most common cause of nursing home placement. The risk of falling increases with age.

Falls and accidents seldom “just happen.” Regular exercise as well as regular eye and physical exams may help reduce the risk of falling. Getting rid of tripping hazards in the home and wearing non-skid shoes may also help. Getting enough calcium and vitamin D reduces the chances of breaking a bone if a fall does occur.

If the person in your care has osteoporosis, they are more likely to break a bone if they fall. Osteoporosis is called the “silent disease” because bones become weak with no symptoms. People often find out they have it when a strain, bump, fall, or even a cough causes a bone to break. Get the person in your care tested.



Why Do People Fall?

Many people who fall, even those who are not injured, develop a fear of falling. This fear may cause them to limit their activities, leading to reduced mobility and physical fitness, and increasing their actual risk of falling.

Some of the reasons people fall are:

- Tripping or slipping due to loss of footing or traction.
- Slow reflexes, which make it hard to balance or move out of the way of a hazard.
- Balance problems.
- Reduced muscle strength.
- Poor vision.
- Illness.

The more medications a person is taking, the higher the chances of falling. Certain medicines increase the risk:

- Blood pressure pills.
- Heart medicines.
- Diuretics (water pills).

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- Muscle relaxants.
- Sleeping pills.

Drinking alcohol also increases risk because it can:

- Slow reflexes.
- Cause dizziness or sleepiness.
- Alter balance.
- Cause a person to take risks that can lead to falls.

Preventing Falls

To reduce the risk of falls:

Outdoors

- Use a cane or walker.
- Wear rubber-soled shoes that don't slip.
- Walk on grass when sidewalks are slick.
- Put salt or kitty litter on icy sidewalks.

Indoors

- Keep rooms free of clutter, especially on floors and in hallways.
- Wear low-heeled shoes and do not walk in socks, stockings or slippers.
- Be sure rugs have skid-proof backs.
- Be sure stairs are well lit and have rails on both sides.
- Put grab bars on bathroom walls near the tub, shower and toilet.
- Use a non-skid bath mat in the shower or tub.
- Keep a flashlight next to the bed.
- Add more lights in rooms.
- Buy a mobile phone so that no one has to rush to answer the phone and to call for help if they fall.

Manage Falls and Increase Activity Level

Do you have concerns about falling? Learn more about strategies to manage falls in our **Matter of Balance Falls Management Program**.

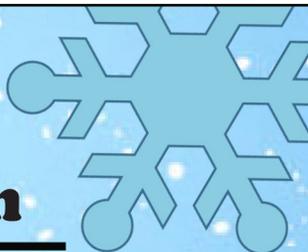
Contact us to learn more and add your name to a list for an upcoming class.

1-800-582-7277
info@aaa7.org



NOTE: Age-related vision problems increase the risk of falling. Cataracts and glaucoma alter older adult's depth perception, visual acuity, peripheral vision and susceptibility to glare.

HEAP Home Energy Assistance Program



Now open for applications for 2021-2022.

This program can help eligible Ohioans manage their heating bills. Applications are available from your local Community Action Agency

If interested or if you have questions, contact your county Community Action Agency or the AAA7 Resource Center at 1-800-582-7277.

Memory Care

Guard Rails - Guard rails on the bed may add to the risk of falls if the person with Alzheimer's attempts to climb over them.

A bed cane may turn out to be a safer alternative. It can offer support and increase balance.

It is like a grab bar with a wooden base that fits between the mattress and the box spring.

Taking Care of Yourself

Exercises to Improve Balance

While holding the back of a sturdy chair, sink, or counter: stand on one leg at a time for a minute and then slowly increase the time. Try to balance with your eyes closed or without holding on.

Stand on your toes for a count of 10, and then rock back on your heels for a count of 10.

Make a big circle to the left with your hips, and then to the right. Do not move your shoulders or feet. Repeat five times.

Source: National Institute of Health



What to Do If You Fall

How hard a person lands plays a major role in determining whether or not they will break a bone. The greater the distance of the hip bone to the floor, the greater the risk of fracturing a hip, so tall people have an increased risk of fracture when they fall. The angle at which a person falls is also important. Falling sideways or straight down is riskier than falling backward on the buttocks.



Whether you are at home or somewhere else, a sudden fall can be startling and upsetting. If you do fall, stay as calm as possible.

Take several deep breaths to try to relax. Remain still on the floor or ground for a few moments. This will help you get over the shock of falling.

Decide if you are hurt before getting up. Getting up too quickly or in the wrong way could make an injury worse.

If you think you can get up safely without help, roll over onto your side. Rest again while your body and blood pressure adjust. Slowly get up on your hands and knees, and crawl to a sturdy chair. Put your hands on the chair seat and slide one foot forward so that it is flat on the floor. Keep the other leg bent so the knee is on the floor. From this kneeling position, slowly rise and turn your body to sit in the chair.

If you are hurt or cannot get up on your own, ask someone for help or call 911. If you are alone, try to get into a comfortable position and wait for help to arrive.

Source: National Institute of Health

Safety Tips - Assistance Dogs

Assistance dogs can make life easier for some disabled individuals. Service dogs help with physical tasks such as pulling wheelchairs, opening doors and offering payment at cash registers. Hearing dogs provide their hard-of-hearing partners with greater independence and security by alerting them to sounds such as sirens and doorbells. Skilled companion dogs work as part of a three-part team with an able-bodied adult, offering a sense of security to people with physical or developmental disabilities such as autism and early-onset Alzheimer's.

The young dogs begin training with professional instructors for six to nine months. Dogs that complete the training are matched with recipients, who spend two weeks training one-on-one with the dogs at a training facility. Disabled recipients are not charged for their dogs. For more about assistance dogs, contact Canine Companions for Independence at www.cci.org or call 1-800-572-BARK (1-800-572-2275).



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.



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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 e-mail at info@aaa7.org.