



NEWS COLUMN – Area Agency on Aging District 7, Inc.

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National Falls Prevention Awareness Day

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September 23rd is National Falls Prevention Awareness Day. Ohio's Fifth Annual "10 Million Steps to Prevent Falls" is being promoted all throughout the month of September and we encourage you to participate! Log on to <https://aging.ohio.gov/steadyu/10millionsteps> for more information.

One in three Ohioans over the age of 60 will fall this year, and for many of them, that fall could lead to a life-changing injury or even death, but the good news about falls is that most of them can be prevented. By knowing and managing your risk factors, you can live a full and active life free from the fear of falling. Here are some common factors that can lead to a fall (information provided by the National Council on Aging):

- Balance and Gait – as we age, most of us lose some coordination, flexibility and balance – primarily through inactivity, making it easier to fall.
- Vision – in the aging eyes, less light reaches the retina, making contrasting edges, tripping hazards and obstacles harder to see.
- Medications – some prescriptions and over-the-counter medications can cause dizziness, dehydration or interactions with each other that can lead to a fall.
- Environment – most seniors have lived in their homes for a long time and have never thought about simple modifications that might keep it safer as they age.
- Chronic Conditions – more than 90 percent of older adults have at least one chronic condition like diabetes, stroke or arthritis. Often, these increase the risk of falling because they result in lost function, inactivity, depression, pain or multiple medications.



Some easy steps you can take to help your older loved one reduce their risk of a fall include:

- Enlist their support in taking simple steps to stay safe.
- Discuss their current health conditions.
- Ask about their last eye checkup.
- Notice if they are holding on to walls, furniture or someone else when walking or if they appear to have difficulty walking or arising from a chair.
- Talk about their medications.
- Do a walk-through assessment of their home (look at lighting, stairs, bathrooms for grab bars or perhaps a shower chair or hand-held shower to increase their safety).
- Participate in a falls prevention program, such as the AAA7's Matter of Balance. Call us at 1-800-582-7277 to learn more.

The Area Agency on Aging District 7 (AAA7) is also a proud partner of STEADY U Ohio, the state's older adult falls prevention initiative. For more information, log on to <http://aging.ohio.gov/steadyu/>.

For more information about the Matter of Balance falls prevention program through the Area Agency on Aging District 7, or about long-term care resources in your community, call our Agency at 1-800-582-7277, or e-mail info@aaa7.org.

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