

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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Watch Out! Slips, Trips and Falls

Dementia and Falls

There are many reasons why older adults are at risk of falling - the effects of medications, slowed reaction times, brittle bones, stiffness, lack of flexibility, and impaired vision. Due to changes in the brain that are caused by Alzheimer's disease (AD), people with AD are especially at a high risk of falling. Slower reaction time, difficulty recognizing changes in the height or depth of a step, for example, can lead to tripping and falling.

Changes in balance and coordination, combined with poor memory, can make it difficult for a person with AD to move from one place to another and avoid hazardous objects at the same time. They may miss a step while looking for a door or trying to listen to someone's conversation. You can reduce the risk of falling by modifying the environment. You can also try to help the person in your care remain as active and flexible as possible. It is also important to provide appropriate footwear and review medications with their doctor.



The Fear of Falling

A person with AD - even in the early stages - may have subtle changes in walking ability that will become more severe as time goes on. This can create difficulty with balance. If the person has other illnesses, the problems may be more severe, so a fear of falling is natural.

To help the person in your care feel more confident, adaptive devices such as walkers or canes can be useful, but you will have to remind them to use the equipment. Bring the cane or walker to the person when they have forgotten it.

Exercises that you can do with the person in your care may improve their balance. Remember, before starting any type of exercise routine, seek advice from the doctor. Start slowly with only moderate effort to give the care receiver time to build strength and stamina. Any amount of exercise helps reduce risk, and the benefits of exercise are cumulative, so find a way to make it easy and enjoyable to exercise. Exercise is also a particularly effective way to reduce depression.

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Have Concerns About Falls??

A Matter of Balance Can Help!

Interested in learning more about this award-winning program designed to manage falls and increase activity levels? Call us at: **1-800-582-7277** or e-mail **info@aaa7.org**



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In Case of a Fall

A good way to tell if a part of the body has been injured in a fall is to compare it with an uninjured part. For example, compare the injured leg with the uninjured leg. Do they look and feel the same? Do they move the same way?

When you suspect a broken bone, follow these steps until 911 help arrives:

- If the person cannot move or use the injured limb, keep it from moving. Do not straighten a deformed arm or leg. Support an injury in the position you find it.
- Support the injured part above and below the site of the injury by using folded towels, blankets or pillows.
- If the person is face down, roll him over with the "log rolling" technique (see illustration below). If you have no one to help you and the victim is breathing adequately, leave the person in the same position.
- If the person does not complain of neck pain, but is feeling sick to the stomach, turn the person on one side.
- If the person complains of neck pain, keep the neck steady by placing a few pillows on either side of the head. Keep the head flat.
- Place a piece of cloth on the injury site and apply ice over the cloth.
- Keep the person warm with a blanket and make them as comfortable as possible.
- Make a splint with cardboard or rolled-up newspaper.

If an arm or shoulder is splinted, you might consider transporting the person by car. For neck, hip, thigh, back and pelvic injuries, use an ambulance because the person needs to lie flat.

Source: Caregiving in the Comfort of Home



Tell Your Doctor

Be sure to discuss any fall with your doctor. Write down when, where and how you fell so that you can discuss the details with your doctor. The doctor can assess whether a medical issue or other cause of the fall needs to be addressed. Knowing the cause can help you plan to prevent future falls. After a fall, your doctor might refer you to other health care providers who can help prevent future falls. A physical therapist can help with gait, balance, strength training, and walking aids. An occupational therapist can suggest changes in your home that may lower your risk of falls.



Don't Fall - Be Safe!

In the U.S., falls are the leading cause of injury for people over 65. Every 17 seconds, someone in this age group is treated in an emergency room for a fall. Every 30 minutes, one senior will die from injuries caused by falling.

Source: CDC

TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF

Add the Extra Positive Phrase

Silencing the critical voice in our head takes long-term practice. Try just adding one extra sentence to each negative, discouraging thought. For example, if the voice inside your head says, "My wife died, and I'm never going to love again," you add, "in the way I loved her." If the voice says, "I lost my job, and I'm never going to find another one," you add, "exactly like the last one." When you eliminate the depressing conclusion by adding a more positive (and maybe more realistic) one, you have a more positive approach.



Source: oprah.com - How To Get Over Anything Faster

TIP - If you, the family caregiver, fall, you may not be able to rely on a person with AD to help you or call for help. Consider enrolling yourself in a First Alert-type emergency signaling service that you can activate in such an emergency.

Alzheimer's Association Support Programs

alzheimer's 
association

What Families Need to Know...When the Diagnosis is Alzheimer's

Caring for someone with cognitive impairment is a 24-hour a day, 7-day a week challenge. This series of educational sessions provides an opportunity for families to learn and share together in an informal setting. Topics are presented by experts in their respective fields.

Brown County (in Clermont County)

Wednesday, October 15 and October 22 • 1:00 pm - 4:00 pm • Mercy Health Clermont Hospital, Batavia

Jackson/Vinton County

Tuesday, October 7 and October 14 • 5:00 pm - 8:00 pm • Holzer Medical Center - Jackson

Understanding and Dealing with Alzheimer's Disease or Another Dementia

This program will provide an opportunity for families and caregivers to learn and ask questions about Alzheimer's disease and dementia, while receiving support from others in similar situations. Program is free of charge. No registration required.

Jackson County: 1:00 pm - 2:30 pm at Four Winds Nursing Facility in Jackson or Jenkins Care Community in Wellston (noted below)

October 16th - Advanced Stage Issues and Decisions (Four Winds)

November 20th - Dealing with Holidays (Jenkins) • December 18th - Open Discussion (Four Winds)

January 15, 2015 - Making the Transition from Home to a Care Facility (Jenkins)

Scioto County: 2:00 pm - 3:30 pm at Best Care Nursing and Rehab in Wheelersburg

October 14th - How to Make Visits More Meaningful (At Home and Nursing Facility)/Dealing with Holiday Issues

December 9th - Understanding Challenging Behaviors

For more information about these programs and other similar programs available in or near your community, or for assistance with registering, please call Melissa Dever, LSW, from the Alzheimer's Association, at (740) 710-1821 or 1-800-272-3900.



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Safety Tips - *Getting Up From a Fall*

Whenever it happens, a sudden fall is startling and upsetting. If you do fall, take several deep breaths and try to relax.

1. Remain still on the floor or ground for a few moments. This will help you over the shock of falling.
2. Decide if you're hurt before getting up. Doing that too quickly or in the wrong way could make an injury worse.
3. If you think you can get up safely without help, roll over onto your side.
4. Rest again while your body and blood pressure adjust. Slowly get up on your hands and knees and crawl to a sturdy chair.
5. Place 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 that the knee is on the floor.
6. From this kneeling position, slowly rise and turn your body to sit in the chair.

If you're hurt or can't get up on your own, ask someone for help or call 9-1-1. If you're alone, try to find a comfortable position and wait for help to arrive.



Source: nihseniorhealth.gov/falls