

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 2012

Fell Down - Now What?

Each year, one-third of the population 65 years of age and older experiences at least one fall, and half of those older adults fall repeatedly.

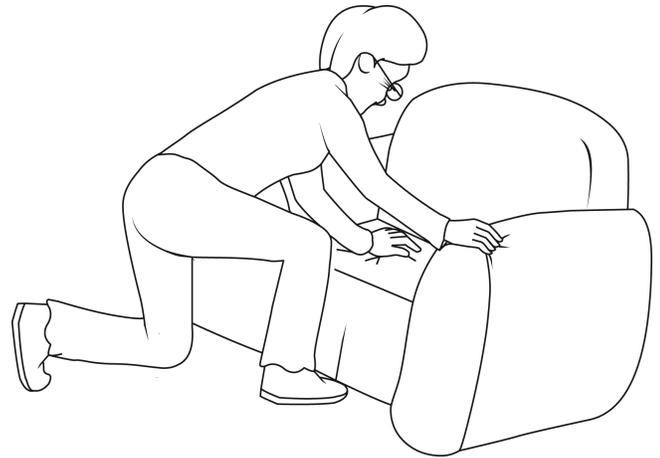
An older adult is treated in a hospital emergency room for a fall every 18 seconds, and every 35 minutes an older adult dies as a result of a fall-related injury. Among older adults, falls are the leading cause of injury deaths. They are also the most common cause of nonfatal injuries and hospital admissions for trauma.

Many people who fall, even if they are not injured, develop a fear of fall-

ing. This fear may cause them to limit their activities leading to reduced mobility and loss of physical fitness, which in turn increases their actual risk of falling.

People who fall frequently should be enrolled in an emergency signaling system. Protective equipment such as knee and elbow pads can help prevent injuries.

Source: CDC



Lifestyle Changes

Lifestyle changes can help prevent falls:

- Stay in when it is rainy or icy.
- Have regular vision screening check-ups for correct eyeglasses.
- Use separate reading glasses and other regular glasses if bifocals make it difficult to see the floor.
- Be cautious when walking on wet floors and remove all hazards such as loose rugs and electrical cords in pathways.
- Wear good foot support.
- Be aware that new shoes are slippery and crepe-soled shoes can cause the toe to catch.
- Have foot pain corrected.
- Keep toenails trimmed and feet healthy for good balance.
- Review medications, which may have side effects, with the doctor.
- Limit alcohol consumption, especially when taken with medications.

Good Tip

Keep Moving! Physical activity can go a long way toward falls prevention. With your doctor's approval, consider activities such as walking or water exercises.



If The Person in Your Care Falls

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:

- If the person cannot move or use the injured limb, keep it from moving. Do not straighten a deformed arm or leg. Splint 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, pillows or magazines.
- If the person is face down, roll him/her over with the "log rolling" technique (see illustration). 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 his/her neck steady by placing a few pillows on either side of their 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 the person as comfortable as possible.
- Call 911.



If someone has fallen and they are face down...



...roll them over with the "log rolling" technique. If you do not have anyone to help you and the victim is breathing adequately, leave them in the same position.

If You Fall

How you react after a fall can cause more injuries than the fall itself. If you try to stand or sit up too quickly, or in the wrong position, you may make an injury worse.

Relax, take several deep breaths and determine if you are hurt. If you believe you are injured, do not attempt to find your way up. Instead, call 911 or seek help from a family member.

However; if you do not feel dizzy, are not in pain, and feel strong enough to stand up, follow these steps:

- 1. Roll over on to your hands and knees.**
- 2. Crawl to a steady chair.**
- 3. Place your strongest leg under you so that your foot is on the floor.**
- 4. Stand up using your arms on the chair for support.**
- 5. Sit on the chair until you feel comfortable to walk.**

Be sure to let your health care provider know about your fall.

A physical or occupational therapist can teach you and the person in your care about the best techniques for standing up from the floor after a fall.

"I do not take a single newspaper, nor read one a month, and I feel myself infinitely happier for it." - Thomas Jefferson

Taking Care of Yourself - **Benefits of Exercising to Music**

Exercising to piano music may help improve balance and prevent falls among the elderly.

A new study shows that older men and women who participated in a piano-music-based exercise program were less likely to suffer a fall than those who didn't. Those who exercised to piano music also showed improvements in balance and the manner or style of walking.



*Source: WebMD Health New;
Archives of Internal Medicine*

Pet Safety

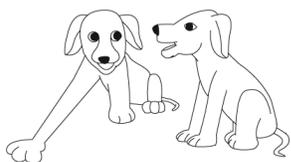
Pets are wonderful companions, but be careful, as 86,000 people a year go to the emergency room because they tripped over the family pet.

Dogs are the primary cause of pet-related falling accidents.

*Source: National Institutes of Health,
Department of Health and Human Services*



"Watch out!"



Interested in a Falls Prevention Class?

The Area Agency on Aging District 7 currently offers "Matter of Balance," a falls prevention class in selected counties throughout our district. For more information, contact Vicki Woyan at 1-800-582-7277, extension 215.

Want to learn more about home and community-based services and how we can help you? Contact the Area Agency on Aging today!

1-800-582-7277 • TTY: 711

e-mail: info@aaa7.org • website: www.aaa7.org



Caregiver Falls

*If you fall as a caregiver, you may not be able to rely on a person with Alzheimer's to help you or to call for help. Consider enrolling **yourself** in an emergency response system.*



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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 nurse or social worker 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.

Fear of Falling

A person with Alzheimer's - even in the early stages - will probably 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. It is natural that they will fear falling.

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 him/her to use these devices. 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, gather advice from your physician. Start slowly with only moderate effort, and give him/her time to build strength and stamina. Exercise helps reduce risk, and the benefits of exercise are cumulative, so find a way to make the exercise easy and enjoyable. Exercise is a particularly effective way to reduce depression.

Source: The Comfort of Home for Alzheimer's Disease

Hazards for Those Using Walking Aids - About 47,000 older Americans are treated in emergency rooms each year for falls associated with walkers and canes. Be sure to have proper training on the correct use of assistive devices.

Source: Journal of the American Geriatrics Society

