



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

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Falls Prevention Awareness

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Approximately one in three older Ohioans will fall each year. Falls are the leading cause of injury-related emergency department visits, hospitalizations and death among older adults. Many medications and health conditions can contribute to a higher risk of falls.

To help end this epidemic, the Area Agency on Aging District 7 (AAA7) recently partnered with the Ohio Department of Aging, the Ohio Association of Area Agencies on Aging, and Walgreens Pharmacy to raise awareness of older adult falls and strengthen pharmacy relationships with referrals to local senior services and supports.

Recently, Walgreens on Bridge Street in Chillicothe and the AAA7 worked together to feature falls prevention awareness as a focus for the August Senior Day held at Walgreens.

It is important to regularly review medications with your pharmacist or health care professional so that you can understand the side effects, drug interactions and any other important information.

A prescription to prevent falls: Tips from STEADY U Ohio

- Maintain a list of all the medicines you take. Include doses, frequency and prescribing doctor. Also include any over-the-counter medicines (pain relievers, antacids, cold medicines, etc.) or supplements you take. Bring the list with you to doctor's appointments and when you pick up prescriptions.
- Read the label. If it says "may cause dizziness or drowsiness," or cautions against driving, ask about the best time to take it to avoid falls. Also ask about alternative treatments with less hazardous side effects.
- Take your medicine exactly as prescribed. If you find it hard to stick to a medication schedule or if you have trouble telling medicines apart, your doctor or pharmacist may have some ideas to help. Similarly, ask your doctor to write detailed directions on how and when to take your medications.
- Talk to your doctor about changes to your eating habits (such as a low-fat or high-calcium diet), as well as how much caffeine and alcohol you consume, as these can affect how your medicines work.
- Ask your pharmacist about easier-to-read labels and instructions if you have trouble reading warnings or directions on your medicine containers.
- Choose over-the-counter medicines that only have the ingredients you need. Your pharmacist can help select the best medicine options for your symptoms.

The Area Agency on Aging District 7 offers "A Matter of Balance", an evidence-based program developed by Boston University, to individuals age 60 and over free of charge. Classes include exercises that improve strength and balance. Attending classes can also help improve quality of life and independence.

If you would like to learn more about A Matter of Balance classes, or if you have questions about resources in your community for seniors or for individuals of any age living with a disability, please call our Resource Center at 1-800-582-7277 or email us at info@aaa7.org.

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