
Improving Quality of Life

June is National Safety Month



Why are older adults at risk for fire death and injuries?

- They are less able to take quick action that is necessary due to decreased mobility, health, sight, and hearing.
- They may be on medication that affects their ability to make quick decisions.

Fire Safety

- 🔥 No smoking especially around an oxygen source (leading cause of fire deaths among older adults)
- 🔥 Plan your escape
- 🔥 Keep medical information on file
- 🔥 Don't overload outlets or extension cords
- 🔥 Proper maintenance of space heaters (automatic shut off)
- 🔥 Special precautions of medications that make you drowsy.
- 🔥 Smoke detectors are tested monthly

What YOU can do to prevent falls

- Begin a regular exercise program
- Make your home safer
- Have your healthcare provider review your medications (i.e. OTC meds)
- Have your vision checked

Statistics show that older adults do not exercise and 35% over the age of 65 do not participate in any physical activity. There are many creative and low-impact forms of physical activity, for fall prevention, for example, Tai chi. Tai chi has

been shown to improve balance and strengthen muscles safely.

The following environmental modifications can be made to prevent falling...

- ✓ grab bars installed in the bathroom
- ✓ non-slip surfaces (remove throw rugs)
- ✓ adequate lighting
- ✓ report cracked or uneven sidewalks
- ✓ hand rails (stairway and hallway)
- ✓ sensible shoes



Did you know...?

- Older adults, at age 65, are twice as likely to be killed or injured by fires and falls, compared to the population at large.
- People aged 75 or older, who fall, are 4 to 5 times more likely to be admitted to a long term care facility for a year or longer.
- A *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society* study of people age 70 and older found that a 15-week tai chi program reduced the fear of falling and cut the risk of multiple falls in half.

Central Ohio Area Agency on Aging
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Source: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, www.cdc.gov, Fire Safety Lasts a Lifetime www.usfa.fema.gov

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