



Health and Welfare Alert

Preventing Falls

Falls are the leading cause of injury-related emergency room visits, hospitalizations, and deaths for Ohioans aged 65 and older, according to the Ohio Department of Health.

For people with disabilities, they are at higher risk for falling at an earlier age, and because of things like vision impairment, muscle weakness, gait and balance difficulties, medication use, or a sedentary lifestyle.

Importantly, falls can be prevented. Direct support professionals are uniquely positioned to actively assess a person with disabilities' risk for falling, and to support them to get assistance and teach them prevention strategies.

Prevention can start with eliminating hazards at home. Loose carpet, wires, clutter, or poorly lit stairways can contribute to falls. Be mindful of slippery surfaces, such as water on floors or ice outside. Looking at possible home modifications to increase lighting or safety features like handrails can help.

In the long term, exercise can help prevent falls by building a person's muscle and strength.



STEADY U Ohio is a statewide collaborative falls prevention initiative supported by government and state business partners to ensure that every county, community, and Ohioan knows how to prevent falls.

Learn more: aging.ohio.gov/steadyu

5 Top Causes of Falls

- Medication
- Weakness and lack of mobility
- Chronic conditions
- Home hazards
- Impaired vision

Medications can also contribute to falling, because medications like sedatives and anti-depressants can reduce a person's alertness. Some medication can affect balance or cause a drop in blood pressure while a person is standing.

Consult with a person's pharmacist or physician about the medication someone uses if they are at a higher risk of falling. Carefully monitor for effects and report concerns immediately.

Fast Stats

The Fall Cycle



Prevention is Key

- Assessment** - What were results and recommendations?
- Team Discussion** - What does the team recommend?
- Person-Centered Plan** - Are fall risks clearly addressed? Has the use of technology been considered for greater independence and safety?
- Training** - Have staff been trained on needed supports like adaptive equipment?
- Communication** - How are changes communicated to the person?

13 Ohioans with developmental disabilities died from falls in 2019

720 Ohioans with disabilities were significantly injured due to a fall in 2018