

April 2011 National Public Health Week “Safety is NO Accident: Live Injury-Free.”

Many Ohioans believe that accidents just happen, but won't happen to them. However, most injuries aren't accidents – they're preventable. The threat of injury lasts throughout your lifetime. Beyond cause cuts and bruises, injuries such as falls can have devastating effects including broken bones, head injuries, disabilities and reduce independence and quality of life. Knowing the risks and taking steps to avoid injuries can help keep you and your loved ones stay safe.

Making life at home safer can be a great investment in your future.

- Increase lighting by adding lamps or wattage to existing lights
- Remove loose rugs and repair damaged floor
- Place electrical cords against the wall or baseboard
- Replace door knobs with lever handles for easier access
- Install grab bars in tub/shower areas
- Place non-slip mats or strips on the tub/shower floor

Reduce risk of falls in the workplace to prevent expensive workers' compensation and medical costs.

- Take your time and pay attention to where you are going
- Adjust your stride to a pace that is suitable for the walking surface and the tasks you are completing
- Walk with feet pointed slightly outward
- Make wide turns at corners
- Always use installed light sources that provide sufficient light for your tasks
- Use a flashlight if you enter a dark room where there is no light
- Ensure things you are carrying or pushing do not prevent you from seeing any obstructions or spills

Participating in regular physical activity helps improve balance and reduce the risk of falls while at play. Mobility problems can reduce ones independence by interfering with activities of daily living. Regular physical activity or exercise helps improve and prevent the decline of muscle strength, balance and endurance – all risk factors for falling. Regular physical activity helps us stay active and enjoy the things we like to do such as dancing, golfing, or gardening.

Walking on a regular basis can reduce your risk for falling while on the move and on your feet! Walking is an easy and inexpensive way to improve balance, ankle strength, endurance and confidence. Talk to your doctor if you are a new exerciser – your doctor will ensure you exercise safely. Simply 30 minutes a day of moderate physical activity on five or more days of the week will make a difference. The 30 minutes can be consecutive or broken into several sessions throughout the day that add up to 30 minutes.

Reduce the risk of falling in your community, know your local resources.

Knowing who is working to prevent fall in your community and where to access local resources is a good start. The Hamilton County Fall Prevention Task Force (FPTF) is the first countywide collaborative to address fall injuries in older adults. The mission of the FPTF is to reduce falls and related injuries in older adults through community collaboration. FPTF is composed of 25 individuals representing government agencies, non-profit organizations, businesses and academic institutions in Hamilton County. For the complete list of these partners visit [Our Partner Organizations](#) page and the [Local Resources and Links](#) page of our website for available community resources.