

Older Americans Month 2014

Safe Today. Healthy Tomorrow.

Older adults have made countless contributions and sacrifices to ensure a better life for future generations. Since 1963, communities across the country have shown their gratitude by celebrating Older Americans Month each May. This celebration recognizes older Americans for their contributions and demonstrates our nation's commitment to helping them stay healthy and active.

This year's theme for Older Americans Month is "Safe Today. Healthy Tomorrow." The theme focuses on injury prevention and safety to encourage older adults to protect themselves and remain active and independent for as long as possible.

Unintentional injuries to this population result in at least 6 million medically treated injuries and more than 30,000 deaths every year. With an emphasis on safety during Older Americans Month, we encourage older adults to learn about the variety of ways they can avoid the leading causes of injury, like falls.

While the Franklin County Office on Aging provides services, support, and resources to older adults year-round, Older Americans Month offers an opportunity for us to provide specialized information and services around the important topic of injury prevention. This information will help older adults take control of their safety and live longer, healthier lives.

The Franklin County Office on Aging provides these programs to help ensure the safety of our older adults as they age at home.

Franklin County Senior Options, a levy funded system of care for older adults and their families, provides information and advocacy, case management, homemaker, medical transportation, adult day care, home delivered meals, minor home repair, personal care, emergency response systems and respite care.

Minor Home Repair services that contribute to a safe, secure living environment for Franklin County older adult eligible homeowners. Priority repairs include: gas leaks, loss of heat, loss of water or loss of electricity, pest control, safety products, smoke detectors, repair/replacement of furnaces, and the construction of wheelchair ramps.

Adult Protective Services assists impaired adults who may be harmed due to abuse, neglect or exploitation by preventing, reducing or remedying conditions causing endangerment to the adult, maximizing the adult's independence and self-direction and preventing unnecessary institutionalization by selecting the *least restrictive alternative* available.



What can you do?

Simple modifications can prevent one-third of all home accidents. These changes not only increase your safety, but also enhance your comfort and increase the likelihood of your remaining independent in your home and community.

According to the National Center for injury Prevention and Control, you can reduce your chances of falling by doing these things:

1. Begin a regular exercise program to increase your strength, balance and coordination.
2. Have your health care provider review your medications to reduce your chances of suffering from light-headedness due to drug incompatibility.
3. Have your eyes checked to reduce your chances of falling due to poor vision.
4. Make your home safer by implements these quick fixes:

Bathroom:

Most falls occur in the bathroom, but with a few precautions the risk for these accidents can be greatly reduced. Use only non-skid mats and carpets in the bathroom and apply non-skid strips or decals on the floor of the tub. Grab bars around the tub or a tub seat will also provide extra support if you have problems balancing.

Bedroom:

Minimize falls in the bedroom by removing any clutter blocking your walking path.

Consider adjusting the bed height or adding a bedside rail to improve your ability to get in and out of bed. A nightlight will increase your ability move about safely in the dark.

Livingroom:

Using the manufacturer's highest recommended wattage in light fixtures can increase visibility in the room. As in the bedroom, create a clear walking path and make allowances for walkers. Limit the use of throw rugs, mats and runners. If these must be used make sure they are secured with double-sided tape or have a slip resistant backing. Add extra seat cushions to increase the height of furniture to make getting up and down easier.

Kitchen:

Making a few changes in the kitchen will help prevent falls and back injuries. Rearranging the contents of your cabinets to make most items easier to reach will limit frequent lifting, bending and carrying. In addition to dating food in the refrigerator and providing adequate light, practicing fire safety in the kitchen is important. Install a smoke detector, place a fire extinguisher next to the stove, have your home heating system checked annually by a qualified professional and use portable heaters sparingly and according to manufacturer's instructions.

**Call (614) 525-6200
for more information the programs and
services of the Franklin County Office on
Aging.**