



Department of
Aging

NEWS RELEASE

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This Valentine's Day, ask your loved ones to go STEADY

Show the special elders in your life how much you care by helping them prevent falls

Columbus, Ohio – Caregiving is the ultimate expression of love and devotion, so for this Valentine's Day, the STEADY U Ohio initiative encourages all Ohioans to learn what you can do to help an older loved one avoid a life-altering fall. One in three older adults will fall this year – don't let someone you care about become part of that statistic.

"One of the best gifts you can give an older loved one is the peace of mind that falls are not a normal part of aging, and most falls can be prevented," said Bonnie K. Burman, Sc. D., director of the Ohio Department of Aging, which leads the STEADY U initiative. "Older adults may not want to talk about falling because they see it as a threat to their independence. By bringing the subject up persistently but respectfully, and showing that you care, you can help remove some of their anxiety around the topic and help them reduce their risk."

- **Don't let your loved one become afraid of falling.** People who fall (or who nearly fall) can develop a fear of falling and change their behavior in ways that may actually increase their chances of falling again.
- **Don't ignore chronic pain.** Pain can cause your loved one to resist activity and exercise, and some pain medications can interfere with balance and stability.
- **Talk with a doctor about medications.** Pain medication as well as common prescriptions for high blood pressure and other conditions



can cause dizziness and loss of balance. Encourage your loved ones to talk to their doctor about treatment options to reduce the risk of falling. Ask for a falls risk assessment.

- **Help your loved one remain physically active.** Any type of movement helps, from simply lifting your legs while watching TV, to walking and taking part in exercise programs. Focus on activities that build strength and balance.
- **Promote good nutrition and hydration.** A balanced diet promotes overall good health, and drinking plenty of water helps prevent low blood pressure, dizziness, fatigue and confusion.
- **Encourage appropriate use of assistive devices.** Walkers, canes, folding step stools with hand rails and reaching and grabbing tools are helpful, but only if adjusted and used properly.
- **Include your loved ones in decisions about changes to their home.** There are many simple and inexpensive changes that can significantly reduce the risk of slipping, tripping and falling.

Visit the STEADY U Ohio [Facebook](#) page this week for Valentine's e-cards you can send to loved ones to show you care about their health and wellness. Falls are not a normal part of aging and most falls can be prevented. Visit www.steadyu.ohio.gov for more falls prevention tips and resources, including a falls risk self-assessment.

Your [area agency on aging](#) also can help you connect to services and resources like minor home modifications and "[A Matter of Balance](#)" workshops. Call 1-866-243-5678 for the agency serving your community.

About STEADY U Ohio – Falls are an epidemic among our elders and are the number one cause of injuries leading to ER visits, hospital stays and deaths in Ohioans age 65-plus. STEADY U Ohio is a comprehensive falls prevention initiative led by Governor John Kasich and the Ohio Department of Aging, and supported by Ohio government and state business partners to strengthen existing falls prevention activities, identify opportunities for new initiatives and coordinate a statewide educational campaign to bring falls prevention to the forefront of planning for individuals, families, health care providers, business and community leaders and all Ohioans. Visit www.steadyu.ohio.gov.



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