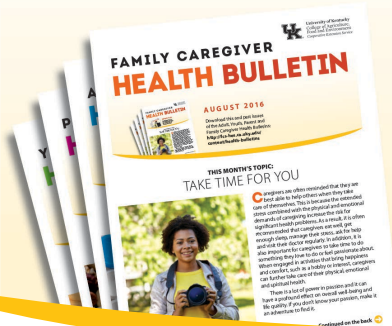




University of Kentucky  
College of Agriculture,  
Food and Environment  
Cooperative Extension Service

# FAMILY CAREGIVER HEALTH BULLETIN



SEPTEMBER 2016

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## THIS MONTH'S TOPIC: FALL PREVENTION



**S**eptember 22, 2016, marks the 9th annual Falls Prevention Awareness Day. This year, the National Council on Aging has named the theme, "Ready, Steady, Balance: Prevent Falls in 2016."

According to NCOA, there are six steps you can take to help an older loved one reduce their risk of falling:

- 1. Talk to your loved one.** Find out if they have concerns about falling or if they are at increased risk for falls based on their lifestyle/environment. Discuss the seriousness of falls, including how a fall is related to injury, dependence, long-term care placement and even death. If there is a concern, suggest talking to a healthcare professional.
- 2. Discuss current health conditions.** Find out if your loved one is having any trouble seeing, hearing, taking medications or

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Disabilities  
accommodated  
with prior notification.

# One in three adults age 65+ fall each year. Falls are the leading cause of fatal and non-fatal injuries.

## → Continued from page 1

managing their own health or independence in any way. Encourage reaching out to healthcare professionals, talking openly about medical concerns and embracing preventative measures and benefits offered through healthcare coverage or the community.

- 3. Ask about eye health.** Pay attention to whether or not your loved one is having trouble with vision, wearing and using his/her glasses appropriately and making appointments to have vision checked every six to 12 months. It is also important to think about environmental hazards associated with vision, such as glare or rooms that are too dark or too bright.
- 4. Notice if your loved one needs help walking, standing or getting up/down from furniture.** Trouble walking or balancing can lead to falls and the fear of falling. If you observe trouble, contact a medical professional such as a physical therapist. A physical therapist can help with appropriate ways to improve balance, strength and gait through exercise. There are also many community-based programs, such as *A Matter of Balance*, *Stepping On* and *Tai Chi*, recommended by the CDC.
- 5. Talk about medications.** Whether your loved one is experiencing trouble with medications or not — such as experiencing side effects or managing medication — it is important that they talk with a healthcare provider about the medications, especially if there is a new prescription, an over-the-counter medication or a change in dosage. Some medications, such as antidepressants and sleep aids, are associated with issues regarding balance and dizziness.
- 6. Assess the home for safety.** If you don't feel comfortable identifying ways to keep a home safe, contact a healthcare provider, such as an occupational or physical therapist. Examples of items to look for include having enough light, especially in stairways or hallways that

## Falls Prevention Awareness Day

SEPTEMBER 22, 2016

Ready, Steady, Balance:  
Prevent Falls in 2016



lead to bathrooms at night; making sure stairs have secure carpet and railings; assessing bathrooms for properly mounted grab bars by the toilet and bath/shower.

Falls are serious. One in three adults age 65+ fall each year. Falls are the leading cause of fatal and non-fatal injuries. They cause broken bones and head injuries and cause people to be dependent, fearful and depressed. Falls make it difficult for people to remain active, which then causes a fall cycle that is challenging to break. By understanding more about falls and by discussing fall prevention, you are better equipped to help a loved one for whom you provide care prevent falls and the fear of falling so that they can better remain healthy and independent.

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FAMILY CAREGIVER  
**HEALTH BULLETIN**

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