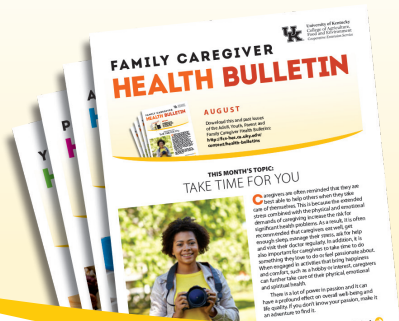


FAMILY CAREGIVER HEALTH BULLETIN



SEPTEMBER 2022

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THIS MONTH'S TOPIC: FALL PREVENTION



The National Council on Aging (NCOA) encourages people to work together to reduce the risk of falling. This year's fall prevention awareness week theme is Strengthening Community Connections in Falls Prevention.

As a caregiver, you can create connections and awareness about fall and fall risk by talking to an older person about falling. Talking about falls is an effective and no-cost strategy to create action and reduce fall risk. You do not have to be an expert to talk about falls.

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Be open and kind. Ask questions, share a fact, and/or share your own experience.

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The NCOA recommends the following tips for talking to an older adult about falls:

- **Be open and kind:** Ask questions, share a fact, and/or share your own experience.
- **Avoid blame:** Nobody is at fault for a fall. Provide solutions that do not make the person feel judged.
- **Be assertive:** Show that you care by how you deliver your message. Use “I” statements to let others know how you are thinking and feeling.
- **Listen:** Sometimes no solution will make an older adult feel better about falling. Be there and listen to their concerns and give support when they are ready for the next step in reducing falls.

The NCOA recognizes that falls can be difficult to talk about. Some people may feel embarrassed talking about a fall or their fear of falling. To help bring up the topic, the NCOA recommends asking questions that might **enhance relationships** and demonstrate that you care. You might ask, “Have you fallen? Or do you know anyone who has fallen?” You can share a fact to introduce the topic such as, “Did you know one in four Americans age 65 and older fall each year?” Another way you might get someone to talk about falling is by sharing a personal experience related to a fall, such as a time you or someone you know fell and what happened as a result.

The NCOA encourages conversations that **create opportunity**. You might ask, “Are you feeling steady on your feet? I see you are hesitant when you get up.” You might share a fact about home safety like how most falls occur at home and how small changes, like adding better light to the hallway, can make a space safer. You may share a story about your own experience related to fall prevention and safety. “I started using a nightlight for my bathroom to make getting up in the middle of the night safer.”

Lastly, NCOA promotes ways to **foster connections**. A great question to ask: “Where do you go for exercise class since there are so many opportunities at home and in the community?” You can share the fact that the University of Kentucky



FCS Extension has programs to learn more about fall prevention and what can be done to stay healthy and safe. You can share an experience related to community resources: “After being prescribed a new medication that made me feel dizzy, I talked to my pharmacist about symptoms and side effects to be sure the dose was right for me.”

NCOA offers many resources and guides to help start conversations, get connected, receive screenings, and prevent falls. To prevent falls in your family and community, connect with the NCOA and your local Extension agent today.

REFERENCE:

- NCOA. (2022). Falls Prevention Awareness Week Promotion Toolkit. Retrieved <https://www.ncoa.org/article/falls-prevention-awareness-week-toolkit>
- <https://www.ncoa.org/article/4-tips-to-help-you-talk-to-older-adults-about-preventing-falls>

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Written by: Amy F. Kostelic,
Associate Extension Professor,
Adult Development and Aging

Edited by: Alyssa Simms

Designed by: Rusty Manseau

Stock images:

123RF.com, Adobe Stock

