



State of Wisconsin  
**Department of Health Services**

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Jim Doyle, Governor  
Karen E. Timberlake, Secretary

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CONTACT: Stephanie Marquis, 608.266.1683

## **Autumn is the Time to Think About Falls Prevention**

*September is Falls Prevention Month in Wisconsin*

As the leaves begin to change color, state health officials are reminding residents of the need to protect against falls. Falls can be prevented. Reducing the risk of falling helps maintain the quality of life and independence for Wisconsin's older adults.

Many factors contribute to falls, including individual and environmental factors. Below are some tips to prevent falls:

- ✓ **Begin a regular exercise program** – it makes you stronger and helps you feel better. Exercises that improve balance and coordination are the most helpful. Check with your doctor before starting a program to help identify what type of exercise would be best for you.
- ✓ **Have your health care provider review your medicines.** As you get older, the way medicines work in your body can change. Some medicines, or combinations of medicines, can make you sleepy or dizzy and cause you to fall.
- ✓ **Have your vision checked.** You may be wearing the wrong glasses or have a condition like glaucoma or cataracts that limits your vision.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, about half of all falls happen at home. Below are some tips to help make your home safer:

- Wear shoes both inside and outside the house – avoid going barefoot or wearing slippers
- Keep sidewalks, paths and stairs clear
- Have handrails on both sides of stairs and steps – both inside the house and outdoors
- Make sure the handrails go from the top to the bottom of the stairs
- Tape small rugs to the floor or do not use them at all – small rugs are easy to trip on
- Have nightlights in the bathroom, bedroom and hall
- Put a mat or non-slip strips in the tub and shower, as well as have a bath mat with a non-skid bottom on the bathroom floor
- Have grab bars installed next to your toilet, as well as in the tub and shower
- Wipe up spills when they happen
- Put items you use often in cabinets or places you can reach easily without using a step stool
- Fix broken or chipped steps and walkways as soon as possible
- Put bright lights over all porches and walkways

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