



PUBLIC HEALTH CONNECTION

SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER 2011

Keep Falls from Ruining Your Fall

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With the season of Fall upon us, the colors of the leaves are not the only things that should be changing. Plant your feet on the ground, stand up for yourself and begin to make changes in your life that decrease your chances of falling. There are many ways you can help yourself.

- Make changes in your home.
- Consider using a cane or walker that is in proper working order.
- Ask your health care provider about simple exercises that will increase balance and strength.
- With help from your physician, see if you need to make changes in medications, vision, or nutrition.

WHY DO YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT FALLS PREVENTION?

Your independence depends on it!

- Each year, one third of people age 65 and older will experience a fall.
- Two thirds of those who experience a fall will fall again within six months.
- At least one third of all falls involve hazards in the home.

BE ACTIVE IN YOUR HEALTH

Ask your doctor to review your medications on a regular basis.

- A doctor or pharmacist should examine all medications (including non-prescription medications) to make sure they do not contribute to drowsiness or light-headedness.

Have your eyes examined every year.

- Using the wrong prescription, or having eye diseases such as glaucoma or cataracts, limits vision, causes problems with glare, and can dramatically affect balance.

Eat a healthy diet.

- A healthy, well-balanced diet can help you maintain good health, especially bone health. Strong bones and good health can help minimize your risk of falling.

Be active everyday.

- Maintain your strength, balance, and flexibility with simple daily physical activity. Being active is very safe for most people as long as they are careful. You can start slowly and build up. Listen to your body. Check with your

doctor before starting an exercise program.

BE ACTIVE IN YOUR SAFETY

- Wear shoes with a firm sole and interior.
- Get your walker or cane professionally adjusted.
- Upon rising, sit on the bedside for 10 seconds before standing.
- Use nightlights, especially in the hallway and bathroom.
- Avoid using throw rugs or make sure they have non-slip backings.
- Make sure it is easy to get in and out of chairs and couches.
- Install grab bars in the bathroom.
- Reduce clutter and keep walkways clear.
- Be careful around pets to avoid tripping over them.
- Use portable phones.
- Consider a Personal Emergency Response System (Lifeline).

Falls can be prevented!

Decrease your chance of falling by following these tips.

GET READY—TIPS FOR OLDER ADULTS

NOTE FROM
PUBLIC HEALTH SAFETY SERVICE AREA

By the time adults are 60 years old or older, they have probably experienced more than one disaster. Many older adults can be an asset during a disaster, calling upon their experience, wisdom and mental resilience to survive, help others, and provide reassurance to those who are frightened or depressed by the events. However, certain aspects of the aging process can make many older adults particularly vulnerable during a disaster, especially if they have one or more chronic illnesses,

functional limitations, or dementia.

To keep planning from seeming overwhelming, experts recommend that older adults focus on preparing for disasters that are most likely to occur in their area. For example, older adults in the Midwest should plan for blizzards and floods. That being said, the U.S. Administration on Aging suggests older adults and their families do the following to prepare:

- Plan how to keep informed about developments during the disaster.
- Identify a meeting place away from home.
- Maintain an emergency supply kit at home.
- Prepare a to-go kit in case of evacuation.

For more information, visit <http://www.cdc.gov/aging/emergency/index.htm>.

- Develop a family communication plan.



ALL AGES NEED REGULAR CHECK-UPS

NOTE FROM COMMUNITY RELATIONS,
INFORMATION AND PLANNING SERVICES

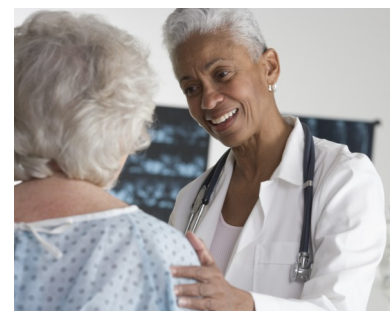
We all know that regular medical, dental, and vision check-ups for children are very important for their health and development. Often, however, we forget that routine check-ups are also important for adults and are necessary for healthy aging. A check-up with a regular provider in each of these areas provides complete care including prevention, screenings, education, and even early

diagnosis of health problems. As we age, we may also need periodic vaccine boosters to keep us healthy into our later years.

What to remember when looking for a medical, dental or eye doctor for regular care. Look for a provider who:

- Accepts your method of payment.
- Has a plan for care after office hours.

- Has an office that you can get to easily.
- Has office hours that will work for you.
- Has information and materials in your primary language.
- Will provide interpreter services if needed.



HIV/AIDS AND AGING

NOTE FROM
CLINICAL HEALTH SERVICE AREA

In recent years, an emerging trend is older people being newly diagnosed with HIV/AIDS. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 15% of new HIV/AIDS cases occur in people age 50 and older.

Some older people underestimate their risk for contracting HIV. There are many social and biological factors that can explain this

increasing trend.

- Many older adults become newly single, widowed, or have grown children; allowing more time for sexual activity.
- New medications allow older adults to remain sexually active.
- Condoms are not widely used because of

unfamiliarity or are viewed unnecessary because birth control is no longer needed.

September 18, 2011 is National HIV/AIDS and Aging Awareness Day.

Visit www.cdc.gov/hiv/topics/over50 for more information on the topic.



GENERATIONS AREA AGENCY ON AGING (AAA)

COMMUNITY PARTNER SPOTLIGHT: GENERATIONS AREA AGENCY ON AGING

Generations is a designated Area Agency on Aging by the Iowa Department on Aging with the responsibility to provide information, assistance, and arrange services for Eastern Iowa seniors age 60 and older.

Since 1973, Generations has helped thousands of seniors and their caregivers throughout Clinton, Muscatine, and Scott counties. A major focus of Generation's services is helping older adults remain in their homes.

Programs and services available:

- Case Management
- GenAge Cafes
- Senior Internship Program for 55 and older
- Family Caregiver Program
- Support Groups
- Choices Connection—Advanced care planning directive
- Stand Your Ground—Falls Prevention

Learn more about what Generations Area Agency on Aging has to offer at: <http://www.genage.org/> or (563) 324-9085.



HEALTHY AGING—FOR YOUR SEPTIC SYSTEM!

NOTE FROM ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICE AREA

Septic systems, like people, can age gracefully with a little preventative care. Yes, this may be an odd comparison, but it is true! Septic systems need to be properly used and maintained to ensure optimal functioning and a long life.

In rural Iowa, many homes rely on septic systems. These systems, when working properly, collect, treat and dispose of wastewater without contaminating

ground water and clogging soil.

Having regular maintenance, inspections, and pump-outs of the septic tank will keep the system working efficiently and can prevent costly repairs. These daily precautions can help keep your septic system healthy:

- **Flush only wastewater and toilet paper.** Other items such as tissues

and sanitary products can harm your septic tank.

- **Don't put food down the sink or use a kitchen garbage disposal.** Septic systems are not intended for the disposal of food items, coffee grounds, grease or fat.
- **Don't rinse toxic materials down your sink or toilet.** Paints, chemicals, and

disinfectants can impair your system.

- **Reduce water usage.** Conserving water reduces the load your system has to handle.
- **Balance water usage throughout the week.** Large volumes of water at one time can stress the system and cause dissolved solids to move into the drainfield. This can result in a clog.

MYTHS AND FACTS ABOUT FALLS

COMMON CONFUSIONS: SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT

Myth: If I fall, I just get up. No big deal.

Fact: Each year, 1 in 3 people age 65 experiences a fall serious enough to require medical attention. Falls can inflict serious injuries, causing disabilities that make it impossible to live independently. Falls are the leading cause of death due to injury for seniors.

Myth: If I stay close to home, I can avoid falling.

Fact: Over half of falls take place right in the person's home. One of the most important steps you can take to cut your fall risk is to do a regular home safety inspection and fix fall hazards.

Myth: If I have experienced a fall, the best way to prevent falling again is to sit down most of the time and avoid physical activity.

Fact: Inactivity actually increases the risk. If you have experienced a fall, the fear of falling may cause you to reduce your level of activity. This reduces energy, muscle tone, and alertness,

which makes falling more likely. Avoid this "cycle of inactivity" by asking your healthcare provider about a fall prevention exercise plan that's right for you.



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MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

- *Labor Day*
Monday, September 5, 2011
Scott County Offices Closed
- **FREE Elderly Falls Prevention Workshop**
Thursday, September 15, 2011; 10:00a.m-Noon
Open to Public. Location: Bettendorf Public Library,
2950 Learning Campus Drive, Bettendorf
- Scott County Board of Health Meeting
Thursday, September 22, 2011; 12:00-1:00 p.m.
Open to the Public. Location: Scott County
Administrative Center, 6th Floor Room 638, 600 W 4th
Street, Davenport
- Scott County Board of Health Meeting
Thursday, October 20, 2011; 12:00-1:00 p.m.
Open to the Public. Location: Scott County
Administrative Center, 1st Floor Boardroom, 600 W 4th
Street, Davenport

OUR MISSION:

The Scott County Health Department is committed to promoting, protecting and preserving the health of the community by providing leadership and direction as advocates for the individual, the family, the community and the environment we serve.

OUR VISION:

As recognized and respected leaders in serving and protecting our citizens, we at the Scott County Health Department are committed to a safer, healthier community and environment. In so doing, we provide a multitude of services with Professionalism, Responsiveness, Involvement, Dedication, and Excellence.



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Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.