

WTNS Radio OSU Extension Update for September 7, 2020
Healthy People. Healthy Finances. Healthy Relationships.

On today's OSU Extension update for Healthy People, Healthy Finances, and Healthy Relationships we'll talk about preventing falls and some upcoming programs from OSU Extension.

September is National Falls Prevention Month with National Falls Prevention Day coming up the first day of fall, September 22. I was reminiscing about the "A Matter of Balance" program I was able to teach with Coshocton Senior Center staff this time last year. It was an inspiring experience to watch the participants gain confidence and strength with our discussions and exercises.

Many people think falls are a normal part of aging. That concept led to interesting conversations with participants in last year's class. There are many seniors who believe there is not much they can do to prevent a fall. The truth is most falls can be prevented. Like many things, this takes planning, thinking ahead, and generally being more aware and in the moment.

Falls are the leading cause of both fatal and nonfatal injuries for people over the age of 65. But just as important, even falls without a major injury can cause an older adult to become fearful or depressed, making it difficult for them to stay active. Helping the older adults in our lives have more confidence about preventing falls can improve their quality of life.

Part of prevention is understanding the changes that occur as we age. Our balance and gait begin to change. This is primarily through inactivity that leads to loss of coordination, flexibility, and balance. Our vision diminishes, making obstacles harder to see. Some prescription medications can cause dizziness or dehydration that can lead to a fall. Chronic conditions can also result in inactivity, depression, or pain. This list can sound overwhelming, but it should be empowering. Recognizing and acknowledging these changes helps us to take charge of our lives at each stage and make the very best of it. The National Council on Aging has some great advice on reducing falls for the older adults in our lives.

1. Ask your older loved one if they are concerned about falling. If they are not concerned at all, share some statistics with them. If they seem overly concerned, suggest that they discuss it with

their health care provider who can assess their risk and suggest programs or services that could help.

2. Ask about their last eye checkup. If your older loved one wears glasses, make sure they have a current prescription and they are using the glasses as advised by their eye doctor.

3. Notice if they are holding onto walls, furniture, or someone else when walking or if they appear to have difficulty walking or arising from a chair. These are all signs that it might be time to see a physical therapist who can help your older loved one improve their balance, strength, and gait through exercise.

4. Do a walk-through safety assessment of their home. There are many simple and inexpensive ways to make a home safer. For example, increase lighting throughout the house, especially at the top and bottom of stairs. Make sure there are two secure rails on all stairs. Install grab bars in the tub/shower and near the toilet.

We will be posting tips and information about falls prevention on our Facebook page “OSU Extension Coshocton County” throughout September. These posts will even include some simple exercise and stretches to improve balance and flexibility. Be sure to check these out and share them with friends and family. You can also find video recordings of Chi Class on the Coshocton Public Library System Facebook page. And remember we have a wonderful Senior Center in our community with very helpful staff who can answer questions about falls prevention.

Now we’ll take a look at some upcoming OSU Extension programs. This Thursday at 7:00 PM, check out the “Declutter Your Life” program on the Coshocton Public Library Facebook page. I’m also teaching an interactive virtual workshop to give you strategies to jumpstart conversations about inheritance and some key decision-making factors in non-titled property transfer. “Who Gets Grandma’s Yellow Pie Plate?” will be at noon on Thursday, September 24. Please RSVP to the Coshocton Public Library at 740-622-0956. Also, this year the Farm Science Review will offer virtual programs on Food Preservation topics, September 22-24. You can find links to these presentations on our OSU Extension Coshocton County Facebook page.

In closing, at OSU Extension, we are proud to work for Coshocton County to help improve our families, farms, and businesses. Please feel free to contact OSU Extension for more information at 740-622-2265 or visit our website at coshocton.osu.edu. Make it a healthy day!