

Hello and Happy Autumn from the Coventry Service Program!

Here at the Coventry Service Program we are busy preparing for cooler Maine temperatures and, as always, in this new season reaching out to our policyholders. One topic that comes up regularly this time of year in our phone conversations is how to prevent falls. As we prepare for winter, we offer our tried and true tips and resources for you to use. We look forward to hearing your reactions about this topic or any others that are on your mind.

Why is fall prevention important?

Falls are serious and costly. Every year, more than [3 million Americans](#) go to emergency departments with fall related injuries. [More than one in three](#) people age 65 years or older has a fall each year, including former President Carter. If you have had a fall, you are not alone. Moreover, you may already know how life changing a fall can be. A fall can cause broken bones, and for many people a [break can be the start](#) of problems that are more serious like reoccurring injury, or even disability. Some people develop a [fear of falling](#) in anticipation of a fall, or after experiencing a fall. Fear can hold people back from [participating in the activities](#) they love.



How can we prevent falls?

There are many things that people can do to prevent falls. Both regular [exercise](#) and improving your [balance](#) can help to prevent falls. Participating in an [evidence based fall prevention](#) program could help, along with [fall proofing](#) your home. *Have a talk with your medical provider before beginning an exercise program.*



Here is a list of fall prevention tips that you may find helpful:

- **Have your eyes and hearing tested [annually](#).** Always wear your glasses or hearing aides when you need them.
- **Move more.** [Regular exercise](#) makes muscles stronger and is an important way to lower your chance of falling. Even 20 minutes per day can help.
- **Have your health care provider [review your medicines and side effects](#).** Talk to your medical provider about side effects to watch for, tell them about any side effects you experience.
- **Stand up slowly after lying down or sitting.** Getting up too quickly may cause your [blood pressure to drop](#), which could make you feel faint or dizzy.
- **Get enough [sleep](#).** If you are sleepy, you are more likely to fall. 7-9 hours per night is [recommended](#), and there are [things](#) you can do to for better sleep. Talk to your medical provider if you are having trouble sleeping.
- **Limit the amount of alcohol you drink.** Even a small amount can affect balance and reflexes; [alcohol is a factor](#) in 60% of falls. **Wear rubber-soled, low-heeled shoes that fully support your feet.** Be aware that [wearing only socks](#) or slippers or going barefoot on stairs or bare floors can be unsafe.
- **[Address your anxiety related to falling](#).** Learning to cope with the fear of falling can help improve your confidence.
- **Take steps to make your home safe.** When you make changes or remodel, consider home safety as part of your focus. Add more light or use brighter bulbs, install or sure up handrails, consider adding grab bars. [Complete a safety assessment](#), or hire someone to do one. This [checklist](#) may help. [The Fall Prevention Center of Excellence](#) has excellent resources and may offer additional information if you are thinking of making some modifications. Prepare now for what you might want or need down the road.
- **Be careful on wet or icy surfaces.** Colder temperatures and inclement weather bring [hazardous walking surfaces](#), try to prepare with salt or sand to be spread where needed. Think about weather appropriate non-skid footwear. Accept a helping arm when navigating.
- **Tell your doctor if you have had a fall.** Even if you were not hurt, it's [important information](#) to share with your medical provider. A fall may serve as an alert for your provider to explore a problem that could be corrected, like an issue with eyesight or medication.

How can Coventry Service Program help?

Give us a call if you're interested in learning more about preventing falls. Let's talk about if you or a loved one has had a fall, if you have a fear of falling, or if you provide care to someone who has a fear of falling. We would welcome the opportunity to talk with you about this important topic, and to support you by sharing information from national and local resources. We will share (with permission) any good ideas and suggestions we hear from other policyholders.

A few notes from us:

This topic, falling and fear of falling, is a complex one. There are many factors that go into how and why people fall, and the recovery from a fall is different for everyone. There is no shame in having had a fall. The information we shared early in this e-newsletter shows that unfortunately falls are quite common. Please talk with your medical provider about any falls you've had, and if you have a fear of falling. There are many ways to reduce falls as part of aging well. Reach out to us, we can share up-to-date information and talk about how it applies to you.



To share with you:



One last glimpse of summer from one of our amazing policyholders! Thank you to L.A.W. from Indiana for sharing her summertime photo with us. She writes "kayaking is such a great way to get in some exercise and enjoy the great outdoors!" We feel like we're out there with her!

Autumn has come to Maine!

Please share your seasonal photos of fall foliage and autumn weather activity with us. We would like to share them in our next newsletter!

Wishing you well,

Erin, Diane, Jacki, Jane, Linda, & Mary



Resources for you:

We have found the following resources to be helpful in the development of this newsletter. Please click on the underlined link to access the webpage:

[National Institute on Aging](#) and [National Institute of Health](#), [WebMD](#), [National Council on Aging](#), [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), [HealthInAging.org](#), [Fall Prevention Center of Excellence](#), [NHS Inform](#), and [Mayo Clinic](#).

Stay Connected. Let us help you prevent a fall.

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You are encouraged to make use of these staff ideas to enhance your lifestyle; however, no content presented here should ever be used as a substitute for direct medical advice from your doctor or other qualified clinician.