

## **Health Matters September Newsletter 2021 Article**

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### **Falls Aren't Always Funny**

We have all seen the video where a person trips or stumbles over something and falls. When mixed with a few good sound effects, they are often humorous. It's OK to be able to laugh at life sometimes but falls are more often than not a life-changing event, especially for older adults.

Falls are an important health concern. They often result in injuries more severe than just a scraped, bruised body and bruised ego. Falls are the #1 cause of accidental injury and death in people age 65+. Even what seems like a simple fall can lead to a trip to the emergency room or call to 9-1-1. Bone fractures and head injuries are common. Most of us are aware of the costs associated with an ER visit and other treatments but the full cost is far-reaching.

Accidental falls kill about 158 Idahoans each year at a cost of \$164 million. We can easily calculate the cost from medical bills but what about lost productivity? What about the cost to have someone who takes time off work so they can take someone to medical appointments? What if that person had to hire someone for childcare while they provided transportation or in-home care? These are just the financial impacts of a fall. It is impossible to quantify loss of functionality, independence, and quality of life. For the 1 in 5 Idahoans who experiences a fall that results in significant injury, there is nothing funny about it.

These are certainly sobering statistics for those age 65+ but falling is not limited to older adults. They can happen to any of us. Are you ready for some good news? All falls are preventable. Fortunately, there are simple steps we can take to

reduce the risk of falls. Invest the time now to learn how to reduce fall risk. And become falls-free

## **Idaho celebrates Falls Prevention Awareness Month each September**

### **Knowledge is Power! Learn about falls at virtual seminars**

Review and register for the four falls prevention seminars in September

Descriptions, dates and registration available here:

[www.aging.idaho.gov/campaigns/fpam](http://www.aging.idaho.gov/campaigns/fpam)

### **Take action to prevent falls**

It only takes a few simple steps to dramatically reduce our risk of falls. We can easily encourage others to do so as well.

1. What is YOUR fall risk? [Answer 12 yes/no questions](#) to find out and get resources to help you reduce your risk <http://www.ncoa.org/fallsfreecheckup>
2. Are there hazards in your home? Do a safety check with [this checklist](#) to identify where to look for trip hazards and resolve them
3. Can you recover from tripping or losing balance? Stay active to maintain balance, strength, and flexibility by doing simple movements each day. Watch our [Simple Steps seminar](#) to learn more.
4. Do your medications put you at more risk for falls? Ask about interactions and side-effects that may make you more prone to falling
5. Are you more likely to fall because you can't see well? Check your vision and get correction (and wear your glasses) or learn skills to reduce misjudged steps and tripping on unseen obstacles

Other than on TV and the movies, falls aren't funny. Avoid the physical, mental, and financial impact of falls. Take charge of getting fall-free this fall!