



1 in 4 Americans aged 65+ falls every year. **Every 11 seconds**, an older adult is seen in an emergency department for a fall-related injury.

– National Council On Aging
ncoa.org

Falls Prevention Awareness Week is September 21-25

According to the National Council on Aging, every 11 seconds an older adult is seen in an emergency room for a fall-related injury. Falls are the leading cause of fatal and non-fatal injuries for seniors, and account for 40% of all nursing home admissions. Nearly half of all seniors sustaining a fall do not resume independent living. The reality is, a fall can change everything in the blink of an eye.

Seniors who fall can become even more afraid of falling. This fear can reduce their quality of life and their ability to exercise and get around properly. Reduced physical activity can lead to a vicious cycle in which an older per-

son's physical condition deteriorates, increasing their risk of falling even more and further hindering their independence and quality of life. For these reasons alone, fall prevention is an essential component of senior care.

Some say falling is a normal part of aging. This is not true. Anyone can take a fall for many different reasons, but falling should never be considered "expected" as we age. There are some simple preventative measures that can be taken to significantly reduce the risk of a fall to you, or your loved one. Taking action now to address these risks is important to staying healthy and in your own home.

Engage in physical activity

The first line of defense against falls and fractures is regular physical activity. As people get older, they typically become less active and begin to lose muscle mass and tone. This leads to a decrease in strength, coordination, and flexibility and an increase in fall risk. The truth is, seniors can improve their stamina, balance and mobility, regardless of their age. If you are physically able, going for a walk with a trusted caregiver or companion is beneficial to your health. Tai chi is also an excellent choice for seniors because the exercise is low impact and gentle. As with any exercise, talk your physician before you begin.

Do a walk-through safety assessment of your home

The first thing to address is creating a fall-proof environment as much as possible. There are some minor modifications that can help prevent tripping and slipping. Have your Assisting Hands® provider walk through your home with you and help decide what things need to be addressed to make you feel safer in your home.

– *Clear floors of clutter and remove electrical cords, throw rugs and anything else that could cause a trip. Walkways should be free and clear.*

– *Increase lighting throughout the house, especially at the top and bottom of stairs. As for stairways, have sturdy handrails on both sides, if possible.*

– *Install grab bars on bathroom walls beside the tub/shower and near the toilet. Make sure they're installed at the proper height for your use. For greater safety, consider using a shower chair and hand-held showerhead.*

Choose appropriate footwear

We all have our favorite pair, but if shoes are worn out or ill-fitting they can be a serious hazard. Supportive, low-heeled shoes with non-slip soles are ideal. Avoid walking around in socks, stockings, or backless shoes.

Use prescribed mobility aids

Seniors are reluctant to get and consistently use a mobility aid such as a cane or walker, even though these devices can play a key role in continuing to lead a safe and active life. It's also important to use them correctly. A physical therapist can help you or your loved one improve balance, strength, and gait. They can also provide guidance on how to use these aids. Poorly fitted or misused aids can actually increase the risk of falling.

Get regular eye exams

If you wear glasses, make sure they are your current



prescription. Regular eye exams are crucial for ensuring a senior is wearing the correct prescription and is screened for eye diseases. Remember that using tint-changing lenses can be hazardous when going from bright sun into darkened buildings and homes. A simple remedy is to change glasses upon entry or simply stop until your lenses adjust. Bifocals and trifocals can be problematic on stairs, so it's essential to use extra caution.

Check all medications

As people age, they are more likely to suffer from a variety of chronic medical conditions that require medication. Seniors with illnesses that affect circulation, sensation, mobility, or mental alertness are more likely to fall. Certain prescriptions cause side effects, such as dizziness, confusion, drowsiness, fluctuations in blood pressure or slowed reflexes that can contribute to accidents as well. Over-the-counter medications and supplements can also cause balance issues and dizziness. Make sure you're taking advantage of annual wellness visits to go over any medications with your health care provider.

As the statistics show, falls among the elderly are a serious problem, and a bad fall can have a huge impact on an otherwise healthy and independent lifestyle. The good news, however, is that falls can be prevented. By doing a little planning and by taking the necessary steps, this threat can be reduced or eliminated, giving you and your loved ones many years of independent living.

Armchair travel: See the world from the safety of your home

With traditional travel non-existent at this time, you should know about *armchair travel*. There's a myriad of free websites that can take you around the world, and, if you're feeling extremely adventurous - to outer space! All you need is an internet connection with your smart phone or tablet. Here's a few to check out:

Mosey over to the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum in Oklahoma at: <https://www.instagram.com/nationalcowboymuseum/>. Tim Tiller, a security guard at the museum, managed its social-media platforms by posting images of display objects. Now, the 58-year-old former truck driver is an internet sensation for his sweet and hilarious content – search *#HashtagTheCowboy*.

Sudoku:

The aim of Sudoku is to complete the entire grid using the numbers 1-9. Each number can only be used once in each row, once in each column, and once in each of the 3x3 boxes. This puzzle is challenging!

Visit www.krazydad.com for further tips and help about how to play – and good luck!

Sudoku puzzle courtesy of www.krazydad.com

7	3			4			9	
	2		9					
		5						8
1				7				
9		7		2		6		4
				9				3
6						3		
					1		8	
	5			3			4	7

Visit the South Pole. Operated by the National Science Foundation, the station livestream makes it possible to visit Antarctica from the comfort (and warmth!) of your home. Check out their various webcams: <https://www.usap.gov/videoclipsandmaps/spwebcam.cfm>.

Blast off to outer space with NASA Space Center in Houston. If you've always wanted to be an astronaut or experience Zero-G, this is your chance to tour NASA's facilities. An animated robot called *Audima* is your tour guide. Check out ten of their labs, wind tunnels and hangars <https://www.nasa.gov/glennvirtualtours>.

For something a little more exotic and far away, on to the Taj Mahal: <https://www.airpano.com/search.php?q=taj+mahal> for breathtaking views from the grounds of the iconic mausoleum which have only been witnessed by the birds who flew over it — until now! Listen to Indian music while you use your cursor for a click-and-drag exploration of the massive structure.

#FindYourPark. Visit one of our National Park gems from the comfort of your favorite chair. Get up close and personal through virtual tours. Learn more about the history of these legendary places and how essential their protection and preservation is in ensuring these sites are enjoyed for generations to come. <https://www.national-parks.org/connect/blog/take-virtual-visit-national-park>.

October is

Breast Cancer Awareness Month

The two most common risk factors for breast cancer are being a woman and getting older. In the U.S., one in eight women will be diagnosed with breast cancer. It is the most commonly diagnosed among women, and the second leading cause of cancer deaths among women. With these types of statistics, you or someone near and dear to you most likely has been affected by this disease.

As a senior, you may be eligible for low-cost, or free screenings. Some loved ones might need special attention to make sure they receive the necessary screening for breast cancer as they age. Caregivers, companions, and family members can help schedule doctor's visits. Your Assisting Hands® caregiver can also ensure transportation is in order to guarantee that missed mammograms are not missed opportunities for early detection.



Simply Delicious

Gluten Free Chicken & Dumplings

Perfect weeknight comfort food! Courtesy of noshtastic.com

Yields: 6 servings; **Prep:** 15 min; **Ready In:** 1 hr 35 min

Ingredients

- 1 whole chicken
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 2 tbsp oil
- 2 bay leaves
- 5 carrots, peeled and sliced
- 3 ribs celery, sliced
- salt & pepper
- fresh parsley

Dumplings

- 2 1/4 cups All Purpose Gluten Free Flour
- 1/4 tsp xanthan gum, *omit if your flour has gum added*
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 1 cup gluten free chicken broth
- 2 tsp baking powder
- 1 tbsp parsley, finely chopped
- 1/2 tsp salt

Instructions

1. Put the whole chicken in a large pan and cover with water and add the bay leaves. It will take about six to eight cups of water to cover the chicken.
2. Bring the pot to the boil and then simmer with the lid on for about an hour, you can skim off the foam and scum from the top of the water as you go.
3. While the soup is simmering prepare the onion, carrots and celery as directed.
4. After the chicken has been cooking for about 50 minutes heat the oil in a second pan (large enough to accommodate the soup) and gently saute the onion, carrots and celery for about five minutes.
5. Add the broth from the chicken to the pan with the vegetables and let it simmer on a medium heat for a few minutes.
6. When the chicken has cooled enough to handle, peel the skin off and tear the meat off the bones and add it to the soup, then season with salt and pepper.



Make the gluten free dumplings

1. To make the dumplings add the dry ingredients to a bowl, then add in the beaten eggs, parsley and chicken broth and mix well.
2. The dumpling mixture will be thick and sticky, drop even sized spoonfuls of it into the pan with the soup.
3. Cover the soup and simmer for 20 minutes.
4. Taste the soup and season, garnish with chopped parsley and serve.

Pumpkin Spice Rice Krispie Treats

Yields: 20 servings; **Prep:** 10 min; **Cook Time:** 5 min

Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons pumpkin puree
- 3 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 5 cups mini marshmallows
- 3/4 teaspoon pumpkin pie spice
- 6 cups Rice Krispies cereal

Instructions

1. Prepared a 9x9 baking dish with parchment paper and set aside.
2. Place your pumpkin puree on a paper towel and allow it to absorb some water.
3. On medium heat melt butter in a large pan. Once melted add mini marshmallows and stir until melted.
4. Next, add your pumpkin puree that has been sitting on the paper towel and the pumpkin pie spice. Last add cereal and mix until well combined.
5. Pour your treats into your prepared baking dish. Use your spoon to press into place.
6. Allow your treats to cool, cut, and enjoy!