



# DELAWARE COUNTY OFFICE FOR THE AGING



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## PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### “TAKE A STAND TO PREVENT FALLS”

The first day of fall is National Fall Prevention Awareness Day. The theme this year is “Take a Stand to Prevent Falls.” Delaware County Office for the Aging will be recognizing National Fall Prevention Awareness on Saturday, September 26, at the Harvest Festival in front of the Delaware County Public Health building.

It is a myth that falling is a natural process of aging. Most falls can be prevented. Fall is a good time to remember to take action on preventing falls in order to maintain independence in your home.

### What can you do to prevent a fall?

Older adults can take steps to make falls less likely:

- **Get some exercise:** Simple exercise, like walking or swimming at least 15 minutes a day. Lack of exercise weakens legs, which increases the chance of falling. Exercise programs like Tai Chi increases strength and improves balance, making falls less likely for aging adults. Delaware County Office for the Aging is scheduling “*Tai Chi for Arthritis*” programs in different areas of the county. These are eight-week programs meeting for an hour twice weekly. Sign up by calling 607-832-5750 if you are interested.
- **Be mindful of medications:** Some medicines, or combinations of medicines, can have side effects like dizziness or drowsiness. This can make falls more likely. Have a doctor or pharmacist review all your medications to help reduce the chance of risky side effects.
- **Keep your vision sharp:** Poor vision makes it harder to get around safely. To help make sure you're seeing clearly, have your eyes checked every year and wear glasses or contact lenses with the right prescription strength.
- **Stay hydrated and eat a well-balanced diet:** Drink six to eight glasses of non-alcoholic liquids daily to prevent dehydration, low blood pressure, fatigue and confusion. Eat a variety of fruits, vegetables and dairy.
- **Remove hazards at home:** About half of all falls happen at home. A home safety check helps identify fall hazards, like clutter and poor lighting, which should be removed or changed. Keep clear pathways between rooms, store items used often within reach and install grab bars in bathrooms for shower, tub and toilet. Consider using a shower bench if unsteady.

- **Sign up for “A Matter of Balance:”** This nationally-recognized program reduces the fear of falling and increases activity levels. Classes are held once a week for eight weeks at convenient community locations. Find a local “A Matter of Balance” class and additional resources at Delaware County Office for the Aging, 6 Court Street, Delhi, NY 13753, 607-832-5750.

In taking the time to make some of the above suggested modifications, you will most likely be able to maintain your independence and prevent a fall from occurring.

For further information on the *Matter of Balance* or *Tai Chi for Arthritis* programs available in Delaware County feel free to meet an Office for the Aging representative at the Harvest Festival in September, or contact Office for the Aging at 607-832-5750.

*Information provided in part by the Center for Disease Control. To learn more, please visit <http://www.cdc.gov/features/fallrisks>.*



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