



# Health and Welfare Alert

## Fall Prevention

#20-3-22

Direct support professionals (DSPs) play a vital role in the health and welfare of people with developmental disabilities.

### Common Fall Risk Factors:

Home hazards; weather and outdoor conditions; lower body weakness; chronic health conditions such as seizures, depression, diabetes, obesity, and COPD; use of multiple medications; reduced vision; disability; poorly fitting shoes and clothes; adaptive equipment that is not functioning properly; nutrition; lack of physical activity and a fear of falling.

### Impact of Seizures on Falling:

Many of the people we serve have a seizure disorder, which may place them at a higher risk of falling. Seizures can happen with little warning causing the person to fall directly to the floor, from a seated position to the floor, or fall into a fixed structure. It is important to make sure the person's environment is as safe as possible for them.

### Medical Considerations:

Medications can also contribute to falling because medications like sedatives and anti-depressants can reduce a person's alertness. Some medications can affect balance or cause a drop in blood pressure while a person is standing. People on medications with "blood thinner" effects (like aspirin, Plavix, Motrin, Advil, Coumadin, Eliquis, etc.) are at increased risk for bleeding when they fall. Unseen bleeding inside the head can be fatal.

### Fall Related Significant Injury/Deaths

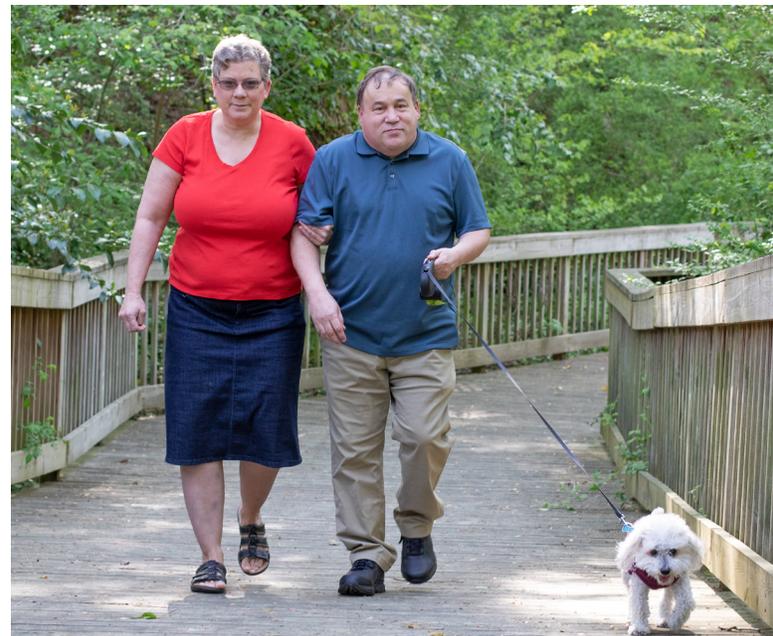
Year	Falls Reported as Significant Injuries	Total Significant Injuries Reported	% Fall Related Injuries	Fall Related Deaths
2017	691	1505	46%	9
2018	721	1474	49%	11
2019	887	1803	49%	15
2020	737	1418	50%	11
2021	774	1556	50%	10

## 5 Things You Can Do to Prevent Falling



### Fast Facts:

- In the last five years, 56 Ohioans with developmental disabilities have died of falls.
- Half of all Significant Injuries MUIs are due to falls.
- According to the CDC
  - » 1 out of 5 falls causes a serious injury such as broken bones or a head injury.
  - » More than 95 percent of hip fractures are caused by falling, usually by falling sideways.
  - » Falls are the most common cause of traumatic brain injuries (TBI).





# Smart Habits to Prevent Falls



## Stay Focused and Informed

- Don't carry large loads that can obstruct vision and affect balance.
- Know multi-focal glasses can affect how someone judges distance.
- Make sure clothing and shoes fit.
- Have a pharmacist review medications for side effects.
- Encourage increased exercise to build strength.

## Keep Stairways Safe

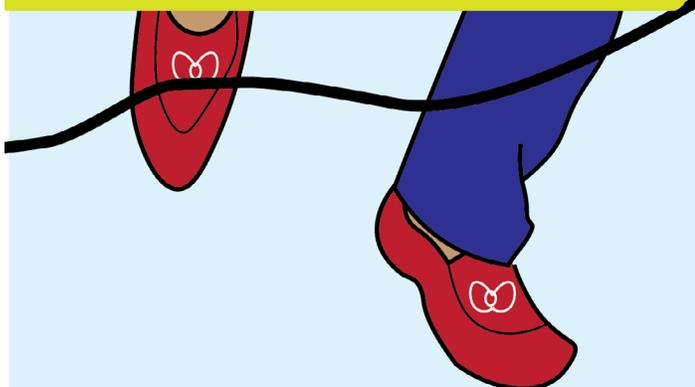
- Every staircase should have a sturdy handrail on at least one side.
- Be sure stairways are well lit.
- Don't store items in stairwells or hang things on handrails.

## Remove Sources of Tripping

- Secure cords away from walking areas and use non-skid rugs.

## Be Aware of Various Environmental Risks

- Keep one hand free to the hold handrail when carrying items.
- Clean up any spills immediately.



Department of  
Developmental Disabilities