



**Preventing Falls...
One Step at a Time**

Falls are the leading cause of injury-related deaths and the most common cause of hospital admissions for trauma in older Ohioans. Health care providers, like doctors, nurses, physical therapist, pharmacists, home health aides, senior center staff and others, are uniquely positioned to actively assess their patients' risk and teach them prevention strategies.

Older adults account for a disproportionate share of fall-related injuries. While Ohioans age 65 and older are 13.7 percent of our population, they account for more than 80 percent of fatal falls.

How Meal Providers Can Prevent Falls

- Plan your delivery schedule so that staff time with the older adults you serve is not rushed.
- Identify consumers who use a walker or assistive device, and plan to spend extra time when delivering their meals.
- Monitor homes for falls hazards (cords, rugs, etc.) and educate consumers about what they can do to reduce their risk of falling.
- During winter months ask consumers if they have someone to help them keep their driveway and sidewalks clear, and provide resources if needed.
- Have and call alternate phone contacts for all consumers in case a consumer does not answer the door on a scheduled delivery day.
- Train staff to recognize consumers who regularly wear safety alert devices or use walkers, canes or wheelchairs. Empower staff to start a conversation with these consumers if they see them not using their assistive devices.
- Ask consumers if they need assistance with opening or preparing the meals.
- Designate congregate meals sites as "Fall-Free Zones" and encourage consumers to report falls risks to staff.
- At congregate meal sites, offer to assist older adults by carrying their meal tray to their table and when they are finished, offer to clear their tray.
- At congregate meal sites, keep aisles clear of obstructions and provide plenty of space between tables.
- Be aware of extreme consumer weight loss or gain. Improper nutrition may lead to muscle weakness and dizziness, which could result in a fall.
- Create a falls prevention policy for your agency and ensure that staff are aware of and understand it.

For more tips and resources to prevent falls, visit:

www.steadyu.ohio.gov