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Falls Prevention Key to Aging Strong and Well
Individuals and the State Can Take Action Together

BURLINGTON, VT – With the average age of Vermont’s population expected to rise over the next decade, state officials are asking people to take actions that will help them stay healthy, and to assist in making Vermont an age-friendly state.

By 2030, one in three people in Vermont will be over the age of 60. As we get older, injuries that once may have been minor can become more serious — including falls.

“September is Falls Prevention Awareness Month, a great time to remind ourselves of those simple, everyday things we can all do to age well and reduce the risk of falling,” said Monica White, Commissioner of the Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living (DAIL).

Those steps include: staying active, having your eyes and hearing tested, getting enough sleep, limiting alcohol, monitoring the medicines you take, and talking to your doctor if you have a fall.

Falling is not a normal part of aging, yet almost 1 in 3 Vermonters (31%) ages 45 and older report experiencing a fall that results in injury each year. A serious injury – especially when you are older – can limit your mobility and independence and increase social isolation, which can lead to additional health problems and even death. In 2020, 171 Vermonters ages 65 and older had a fall-related death.

“A history of falls or fear of falling may lead older people to avoid activities that they enjoy,” said Health Commissioner Mark Levine, MD. “Injury prevention and being active – walking, social involvement, even just shopping – are key to fostering better health.”

The State of Vermont is also hoping people will weigh in on a comprehensive plan being developed to make Vermont an age-friendly state. Age Strong VT is a 10-year, multisector roadmap that will address a variety of strategies, including for housing and independent living, transportation, wellness and injury prevention, public safety, social connections, and financial security. Visit HealthVermont.gov/AgeStrongVT to offer your ideas and suggestions.

“An age-friendly state means people doing what they can for their own health, and a statewide commitment to creating healthy communities and systems to support those efforts,” said White. “Together, we can have the Vermont we all want – a healthy place for everyone, young and old, to live, work and play.”

Take steps to prevent falls:

- **Take the [Falls Free CheckUp](#)** to know your risk.
- **Stay physically active.** Many great exercise programs, including those designed to help prevent falls, are offered across Vermont at senior centers, YMCAs and other locations. Call your local Area Agency on Aging 1-800-642-5119 to find a class near you.
- **Have your eyes and hearing tested.** Even small changes in [sight](#) and [hearing](#) may cause you to fall.
- **Know the [side effects of any medicine you take](#).**
- **[Get enough sleep](#).**
- **Limit the [amount of alcohol](#) you drink.**
- **Stand up slowly.**
- **Always [tell your doctor](#) if you have fallen since your last checkup, even if you aren't hurt when you fall.** Knowing about a fall can help your doctor provide you with the best care, alert them to check your medications, and make sure your vision is OK.

Find more about Falls Prevention and Healthy Aging:

- Falls Free Vermont – FallsFreeVT.com
- Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living – ASD.Vermont.gov
- Department of Health – HealthVermont.gov/PreventFalls
- National Council on Aging – ncoa.org/older-adults/health/prevention/falls-prevention

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We have been the state's public health agency for more than 130 years, working every day to protect and promote the health of Vermonters.

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