



Preventing Falls and Fear

by [Sharon Roth Maguire, MS, APRN-BC, GNP, APNP](#)

Most caregivers are aware of the importance of preventing falls. When a fall occurs, the results can be life changing. While we all realize the significance of a broken bone that may result from a fall, what we sometimes fail to acknowledge is the broken spirit that



may occur after a fall. Many elders who fall never fully regain confidence in their ability to navigate

around their home or near steps. They may experience a fear of falling again that may cause them to limit their activity. They may have a permanent disability—not only from the physical consequences of the fall, but from the emotional consequences as well.

What then can be done to reduce the likelihood of falling? There are four major risk areas to target when you think of fall reduction:

- Environmental Risk
- Age-Related Risk
- Health- Related Risk
- Medication Risk

Minimizing environmental risk would include things like providing handrails near the toilet and tub to make it easier for the individual to get up or get balanced; using non-skid throw rugs, or better yet, no throw rugs at all; keeping pathways to and from the bathroom, bedroom, and kitchen free of clutter.

Reducing age-related risk would include things like accommodating for vision and hearing changes that make it more difficult for the older adult to interpret their environment and to see or hear clearly. Eyeglasses should be of the correct strength, in good repair, and clean. Lighting needs to be increased, but not to the extent that it produces glare. A nightlight will help reduce the dramatic and often blinding changes in light when going from a darkened bedroom to a brightly lit bathroom. Hearing aids should be cleaned regularly as

wax may accumulate and prevent them from working properly. Hearing aid batteries should be replaced regularly to ensure good function.

Reducing health-related risk requires a good healthcare partner and a motivated patient. Osteoporosis is primarily a disease that affects older women and those who have taken medications known as long-term steroids (often used for the treatment of severe arthritis and asthma). These medications cause bones to become increasingly fragile and break even without trauma.

Older adult women should be screened for osteoporosis to determine the density of their bones and if medication management is required. All older adults should get regular weight bearing exercise and eat a well-balanced diet to maintain their bone health. Older adults need as much calcium as pregnant women (1200 mg/day) Vitamin D requirements also increase with age (400-600 IU/day) and are essential for healthy bones as well.

The last category for risk reduction is medication awareness. As we age, we are at risk of taking many medications for many ailments prescribed by many providers; a situation known as polypharmacy. There is much research and increasing awareness of the potentially hazardous effects of polypharmacy. It is well documented that the more medications an individual takes, the greater their risk of side-effects, drug interactions, and falls.

Certain medications are particularly dangerous. Anti-anxiety medications like Valium, Xanax and Ativan; sleeping pills like Ambien, Restoril, and even Tylenol PM have been implicated in increasing fall risk. Discuss your loved one's medication regimen with the prescriber and focus on reducing or eliminating those drugs that increase the risk of falling. Should your loved one require extended care somewhere other than home, be sure to ask what their fall reduction program has to offer.

Fear of falling is a very real phenomenon that is as important to reduce as the physical consequences of a fall. Both can be life changing and demand our attention to reduce the likelihood of a fall occurring.

Tuesday CONNECTION

COMMUNITY CHURCH OF COLUMBUS

Registration

Need a ride on Tuesdays? Text 812-703-1215

Tuesday Connection starts again on September 16 for an eight-week series. Dinner is available between 5:30-6:15 and groups start at 6:30

Register: www.cccolumbus.org and click on the Tuesday Connection or events link or call 317-884-7627 or email communitydowntown@gmail.com

Tuesday Connection offers the opportunity for individuals to engage in enrichment groups of all kinds.

Dates: Sep. 16 - Nov 11

*Among the groups offered this year is **Replanted** - Adults who are foster parents, adoptive parents or grandparents raising grandchildren*

Upcoming Thrive Alliance Events

- **Bingocize**, Mondays and Thursdays, September 15 - November 20, 10:00 to 11:00 a.m. - Brown County Public Library, 205 Locust Lane, Nashville.
- **Powerful Tools for Caregivers**, Mondays, September 15 - October 20, 4:30 to 6:00 p.m. - Doug Otto United Way Center, Columbus.
- **Thrive Alliance Cornhole Fundraiser**: Saturday, October 4, beginning at Noon at The Brick in Jonesville. A fun tournament to support Thrive Alliance Adult Guardianship Programs. 32-team, double elimination tournament with prizes, vendors, and lots of fun. Registration fee of \$50 per two-person team: <https://tinyurl.com/ThriveCornhole>



Labor Day Word Scramble

Labor Day is celebrated in the United States on the first Monday of September. The jumbles here include both historically significant words and ways people celebrate today.

MVNEMEOT _____

MANPLUL _____

AYPTR _____

EBESRMTEP _____

EWEKEDN _____

SWEAG _____

TSRGIH _____

AYONDM _____

DRAET _____

TKEIRS _____

ABUEERCB _____

TFAFIRC _____

IOTAVACN _____

ILOYAHD _____

IRZEAOGN _____

CUYTISRE _____

LRAYL _____

CPCIIN _____

RCEGMIU _____

BARLO _____

ARDPEA _____

NNUIO _____

RTPI _____

OJB _____

Do you have an email address? Want to receive your newsletters electronically? Please submit your email address to iferril@thrive-alliance.org for future correspondence! If you desire a listing of caregiver support groups whether live or virtual please e-mail or call me at 812-399-5854. We also have a Thrive Alliance Caregiver Resources Facebook group. Please e-mail or call if you would like to be a part of the group. If you want removed from the mailings, please let me know as well.



The Caregivers

You carry the weight of my world on one shoulder
and your own cross on the other
And I know it's all you can do
to put one foot in front of the other.

I wish I could tell you what you mean to me
You are strength and sacrifice
love and light
courage for the fight
But I see that you are tired.

So pause, please
Just for a moment
Rest, breathe.

I need you
and I need you to take care of you
I love you and I want to help
but I'm unable to.

Ask for help, please
if not for your sake then for mine
I'd like you to have someone to lean on
the way I lean on you all of the time.

I want you to thrive, please
know that you deserve to
For caregivers need care too.



POWERFUL TOOLS FOR CAREGIVERS PROGRAM

September 15 - October 20

Mondays, 4:30 PM - 6:00 PM

Doug Otto United Way Center

2nd Floor Conference Room

1531 13th Street – Columbus

Date	Topic of Class
September 15	“Taking Care of You”
September 22	“Identifying & Reducing Personal Stress”
September 29	“Communicating Feelings, Needs, & Concerns”
October 6	“Communicating in Challenging Situations”
October 13	“Learning from our Emotions”
October 20	“Mastering Caregiving Decisions”

Powerful Tools for Caregivers is an educational series designed to provide you with the tools you need to take care of yourself. This program helps family caregivers reduce stress, improve self-confidence, communicate feelings better, balance their lives, increase their ability to make tough decisions and locate helpful resources. This program is designed for those who are long-distance caregivers, caregivers to individuals with disabilities, grandparents raising children, caregivers of older adults, and those living with dementia.

Program is FREE, but registration is required.

Deadline to register: September 12, 2025

To register: 812-372-6918 Ext 2402 or email jferril@thrive-alliance.org



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Enhancing lives. Building communities.