



DEPT. OF DISABILITIES, AGING & INDEPENDENT LIVING  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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#### **MEDIA CONTACT**

Hope Smith, Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living,  
802-798-9308 / 802-241-0351

[Hope.Smith@vermont.gov](mailto:Hope.Smith@vermont.gov)

Ben Truman, Vermont Department of Health

802-316-2117 / 802-863-7281

[Bennett.Truman@vermont.gov](mailto:Bennett.Truman@vermont.gov)

### **Support Healthy Aging Through Falls Prevention**

WATERBURY, VT – Each year, many Vermonters experience a fall, yet only half will tell their health care provider. A fall can cause an injury and may result in hospitalization. A serious injury - especially when you are older - can limit a person's mobility and independence and increase social isolation, which can lead to additional health problems. Falling is not a normal part of aging, and can be prevented by doing the right exercises, making your home safer, getting regular health checkups, and more.

State health officials, together with Falls Free Vermont, a statewide resource for falls prevention information and training, encourage Vermonters to ask themselves these questions: ***Have I fallen in the past year? Do I feel unsteady when standing or walking? Do I worry about falling?*** These screening questions can help you determine your risk of falling. Talk to your doctor if you answered 'yes' to any of these questions and consider the often simple steps you can take to reduce your risk of falling.

"One in three older Vermonters will suffer from a fall-related injury each year, making unintentional falls the largest portion of the burden of injury in Vermont," said Health Commissioner Mark Levine, MD. "The good news is that falls are preventable and healthy aging is a quality-of-life goal we can achieve."

Take these steps to help prevent accidental falls:

- Talk to your health care provider about any past falls, even if they did not lead to an injury.
- Review your medications and any side effects. Consider Vitamin D supplements.
- Have your vision and hearing checked annually and update eyeglasses and hearing aids as needed.

- Get moving! Try Tai Chi and other activities proven to improve balance and strength.
- Assess your home environment. You can reduce your fall risk by removing trip hazards, improving lighting, installing handrails and grab bars, and taking extra care around pets that may be underfoot.

“Vermont’s population is among the oldest in the U.S., and all of us have a role in promoting healthy aging and preventing falls,” said Monica White, Commissioner of the Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living. “If you’re not at risk for falls yourself, chances are that you know someone who is. Being aware of how to prevent falls benefits everyone. All Vermonters should make it a priority to take some of these simple actions to prevent accidental falls – for themselves and their loved ones.”

#### **More information about Falls Prevention and Healthy Aging:**

- A new Falls Free Vermont website will release soon. In the meantime, check out the group’s Facebook page at [facebook.com/FallsFreeVT](https://facebook.com/FallsFreeVT) for updates and information.
- Call the Vermont Area Agencies on Aging Help Line: 800-642-5119
- The Vermont Department of Health: <https://www.healthvermont.gov/emergency-preparedness-ems/injury-prevention/prevent-falls>
- Vermont Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living’s Adult Services Division <http://asd.vermont.gov/>
- National Council on Aging <https://www.ncoa.org/older-adults/health/prevention/falls-prevention>

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