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Help Prevent Falls and Brain Injuries - Make Every Day a Falls Prevention Day!

The Department of Disabilities, Aging, and Independent Living encourages Vermonters to act every day to prevent falls and traumatic brain injuries. March is Brain Injury Awareness Month and it is estimated that one in three traumatic brain injuries is the result of a fall. The Vermont Department of Health's 2018 Injury and Violence Report found that unintentional falls are the leading cause of injury resulting in hospitalization among people age 65 and older. Vermont's fall rate for persons age 65 and older is significantly higher than the national average (35.3% compared to 29.5%), and Vermont is ranked 49th among states for having the second highest prevalence of falls in the nation. Among all ages, unintentional falls result in an average of 1,934 hospitalizations and an average of 137 deaths each year in Vermont.

The good news is that falls and related brain injuries can be prevented! These tips can help prevent falls among older Vermonters:

- Stay active. Take a Tai Chi class or other exercise program that strengthens core muscles and helps with balance.
- Talk to your doctor about your fall concerns and review medications that may make you dizzy, dehydrated or sleepy. Ask about taking Vitamin D supplements.
- Get your eyes and ears checked regularly.
- Make your home safer. Use a [safety checklist](#) to take steps to prevent falls at home. Declutter the home. Make sure your home has lots of light by adding more or brighter light bulbs. Add grab bars inside and outside your tub or shower and next to the toilet. Put railings on both sides of stairs.

Falls and traumatic brain injuries, which include concussions, can happen at any age. As part of Brain Injury Awareness month, you can take steps to prevent these injuries.

- At work, prevent falls by understanding and using health and safety practices. [Project WorkSAFE](#) can consult with employers and help train employees to prevent workplace injuries.
- At home, distractions can cause a fall. Slow down. Be aware of unsafe and uneven surfaces, icy conditions, and indoor hazards. Keep headphone and earbud volume turned

down to hear what's going on around you. Wear a helmet for sports or recreational activities.

Call the [Brain Injury Association of Vermont](#) at (802) 244-6850 to learn more about preventing a brain injury and to find resources for yourself or loved ones who have experienced a brain injury. Contact the [Falls Free Vermont Coalition](#) for more information about fall prevention programs in your area and other resources.

About the Department of Disabilities, Aging & Independent Living (DAIL):

Our mission is to make Vermont the best state in which to grow old or to live with a disability - with dignity, respect and independence.

<http://dail.vermont.gov/>

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