PREVENTING FALLS
Every week, 9 older adults die and 124 are hospitalized from a fall-related injury in Oklahoma.

ENVIRONMENT
Most falls happen in homes and are entirely preventable.
- All rooms in homes should be well-lit. Put in brighter light bulbs, and install night lights.
- Clutter and tripping hazards cause falls. Make sure all pathways are clear and clean.
- Stairwells should be well-lit, clear of objects and have handrails on both sides.
- Put grab bars next to and inside the tub and next to the toilet. Use non-slip mats in the bathtub and on shower floors.

HEALTH
Older adults with hip or bone weakness, arthritis, osteoporosis and blood pressure fluctuation are more prone to falls.
- Ask your doctor to assess your risk of falling.
- Share your history of recent falls.
- Get your vision and hearing checked annually.

MEDICATION
Many medications have side effects that can affect an older adult’s coordination and balance or cause dizziness, confusion or sleepiness.
- Ask a doctor or pharmacist to review all medications, including prescriptions, over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and minerals.
- Make sure medications are properly labeled and there are clear instructions for usage.

EXERCISE
Oftentimes, older adults fear that exercise may lead to a fall, but regular physical activity is the first line of defense against falls and fractures.
- Many communities offer group exercise classes, such as water aerobics and Tai Chi, which use slow, flowing movements to help relax and coordinate the mind and body.
- Mild weight-bearing exercise, like walking or climbing stairs, helps slow bone loss from osteoporosis and increase muscle strength.

Did You Know?
Many people who fall, even if they are not injured, develop a fear of falling. This fear may cause them to limit their activities, leading to reduced mobility and loss of physical fitness, which in turn increases their actual risk of falling.
Moving for Better Balance in Oklahoma

TAI CHI

Tai Chi: Moving for Better Balance is an evidence-based fall prevention program that was designed to be used in community-based organizations. Accumulating evidence suggests that Tai Chi eight-form exercises are an effective means of improving balance, functional limitations, and muscle strength, which reduces the risk of falling. Tai Chi is a low-impact dance-like exercise that can be modified to meet the individual participant’s needs and can be done in almost any location. It also helps to build confidence from the fear of falling, which is commonly found in older adults.

BENEFITS OF TAI CHI

- Improves Balance and Posture
- Improves Functional Limitations
- Strengthens Muscles
- Builds Confidence from the Fear of Falling
- Improves Mental and Physical Health (Positive attitudes, self-esteem and well-being)
- Improves Musculoskeletal Conditions (Reduction of arthritic symptoms; increases in flexibility and mobility)
- Improves Cardiovascular Functions
- Reduces Hypertension
- Improves the Quality of Sleep
- Enhances Stamina
- Increases Energy

RESOURCES

Oklahoma seniors are invited to join a local Tai Chi: Moving for Better Balance class. To receive more information on classes and how to prevent falls, contact the OSDH Injury Prevention Service at (405) 271-3430 or visit falls.health.ok.gov.

Injury Prevention Service
Oklahoma State Department of Health
1000 N.E. 10th Street
Oklahoma City, OK 73117
Phone: (405) 271-3430
falls.health.ok.gov

The Oklahoma State Department of Health (OSDH) is an equal opportunity employer and provider. This publication, issued by the OSDH, was authorized by Terry L. Cline, PhD, Commissioner of Health, Secretary of Health and Human Services. A digital file has been deposited with the Publications Clearinghouse of the Oklahoma Department of Libraries. Copies have not been printed but are available for download at www.health.ok.gov. November 2016, Graphic Design: Gayle L. Curry

This fact sheet was supported by grant number 1 NB01OT009068-01-00 from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, or the U.S. government.