



### **Keep the spring in your step to help prevent falls...**

It seemed like it would never come, but spring officially began on Wednesday, April 20<sup>th</sup>. We are ready for some warmer weather after such a long lasting and unusual winter. When spring weather arrives, we urge all older Ohioans to increase their activity by building strength and balance, and reduce their risk of falling.

Some things you can do this spring to take control of your falls risk:

- Get at least 15 minutes of simple exercise, like walking, biking, swimming or gardening, each day.
- Attend a balance and exercise program designed to help build balance, strength and flexibility.
- Ask your health care provider for an assessment of your risk of falling.
- Review your medications with your doctor or pharmacist.
- Get your vision and hearing checked, and talk to your vision and hearing specialists about falls.
- Eat regularly and choose a variety of vegetables and calcium-rich foods.
- Drink plenty of fluids to prevent dehydration.

Common risk factors for older adult falls include loose rugs, obstacles in walkways, poor lighting, balance issues, pets, medications and certain health conditions. In addition, spring weather brings some unique falls risks:

- Winter thaw and spring storms can create mud, which can make walking surfaces hazardous. Avoid walking in mud and keep shoes clean of mud and dirt.

- Wind and rain can cause debris to cover or block walkways. Be alert to obstacles in your path, and if you don't feel safe, find another way.
- Standing floodwater can hide obstacles and make you slip or trip, and moving water can knock you off your feet. Never walk in floodwaters.
- Severe weather can cause power outages. Keep a flashlight nearby (e.g., near your chair and bed) so you don't have to walk in the dark. [www.aging.ohio.gov](http://www.aging.ohio.gov)

**BEFORE SPRING AND SUMMER SEVERE WEATHER THREATENS:  
Know the terms used by weather forecasters:**

**Severe Thunderstorm** – A thunderstorm that produces a tornado, winds of at least 58 mph, and/or hail at least ¾" in diameter, or causing structural wind damage, may imply the occurrence of a severe thunderstorm.

**Flash Flood** – A flood which is caused by heavy or excessive rainfall in a short period of time.

**Tornado Watch** – Tornadoes are possible in your area. Remain alert for approaching storms. Listen to the media for updates.

**Severe Thunderstorm Watch** – Tells you there is a possibility of severe thunderstorms in your area likely to occur. Watch the sky and stay tuned to know when warnings are issued.

**Flash Flood Watch** – Flash flooding is possible in and close to the watch area, but the occurrence is neither certain or imminent. Stay tuned for updates.

**Tornado Warning** – A tornado has been sighted or indicated by weather radar. Take shelter immediately.

**Severe Thunderstorm Warning** – A severe thunderstorm is occurring or will likely occur soon in your area. Warnings are for imminent danger to life and property to those in the path of the storm. Seek shelter immediately.

**Flash Flood Warning** - Flash flooding is in progress, imminent, or highly likely. Seek higher ground immediately, or evacuate if directed to do so.

[www.noaa.gov](http://www.noaa.gov)