

Chesterfield Council on Aging

October 2020 Newsletter



Chesterfield COA & Community Center

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Chesterfield, MA 01012

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413-296-4007

Leaves are Falling and COVID is still with us: Now what?



Now more than ever, home is where many of us are seeking refuge and comfort in light of the novel coronavirus. This continues to be a tough time for everyone. How do we muddle through the fall? No Cummington Fair, no Three County Fair, no Big E and Halloween is coming. We can still go walking or leaf peeping on our own, with family or someone in your "pod". (Pods are small, self-contained networks of people who limit their non-distanced social interaction to one another—in other words, they're the small group of people with whom you share air without using breath-control precautions such as masks), but somehow it still doesn't feel the same. And it's soon going to get cold. There's a big elephant looming in everyone's living room challenging us to find a good way around it.

It takes courage, creativity and ingenuity to move forward. An old saying that comes to mind is "Eat, Drink and be Merry". Yes, there is a second part to that saying, but skip it, it's not needed.

EAT

Beyond the obvious need for nutrition, there's no doubt that food is an important, if not essential ingredient for pleasure, reducing stress, increasing sociability and sharing with others (if COVID precautions are taken). Foods can help tame stress in several ways. Comfort foods, like a bowl of warm hot cereal, boost levels of serotonin, a calming brain chemical. Other foods can cut levels of cortisol and adrenaline, stress hormones that take a toll on the body over time. Sometimes the simple comforts of cooking will indelibly ease the problems of today and tomorrow. Just walking into the kitchen to make yourself something to eat—no matter your situation and how you feel about it—is always a good path to pleasure.

At Home: Now that we're home more, it's been

easier to think about having the time to cook. Many people are saying that they are cooking more, baking more and enjoying more by trying different recipes, even experimenting with some really healthy ones. Old cookbooks have come off the shelves. New recipes are found on the internet. Having the time to really put a good meal on the dinner table or creating new treats is such a change from having to rush through the day to be somewhere else. *Where were we going anyway, that was so important?* Do you have any recipes you had never tried until now and liked a lot?

Away from home: Some are getting into finding some good roadside spots for eating outdoors or taking food home. Around here we have the Chesterfield General Store, A-1 Hilltown Pizza, Local Burgy, The Snack Bar (where you can now eat inside with limitations), to name a few. It's so good to go in and sit down and to see friends at the same time, if you recognize them with their masks on. Thankfully taking it off to eat removes the mystery and saves embarrassment. Several stories are being told about mistakes in guessing. There is a new place where a bit of the fair comes to you: it's called Poppie's Concessions, a familiar vendor usually found at many fairs. They have a food truck on Route 9 in Williamsburg headed toward Goshen. It even has picnic tables. Beware! Fried dough lurks there.

DRINK

October brings with it great cider, but there are other choices to play with, such as making concentrated syrups from fresh fruit like grapes and berries, to make spritzers or cordials. Everyone has their own favorites, both alcoholic and non alcoholic as "go to drinks", but maybe something different would be fun...or not, depending on your own taste buds. Unfortunately, we've learned the hard way that hard liquor and social gatherings don't mix (no pun intended) with COVID-19 large gatherings.



There are other old standbys: coffee and tea. It's interesting to remember that some of the old ways to make coffee or tea also helped us avoid being too rushed or stressed out.

Coffee: Back in the day, when we used to make coffee with a percolator, you could enjoy the benefits of coffee for a longer period of time. The aroma alone can bring back comforting memories. Waiting around a table, enjoying the sound of small bubbling, and waiting for the perking to stop can all set off a gentler way to “wake up and smell the roses” literally and figuratively. You’re often in good company with whom to start the day whether it’s just you or others.

In today’s world, the experience is often very different. No hanging around for perking, sliding into a new day or having much time to savor the experience. Grabbing a cup of joe from a timed coffemaker and rushing off to be someplace else is not gentle. It’s often jarring. The new ways to have coffee are not without merit. The new selections of coffee are staggering and you can get just about any type or flavor you want to try. Why not become your own barista and linger longer in the kitchen?. I know, I know, in today’s “real” world, life is more about speeding into or from the day, not lingering or reflecting on how the journey is unfolding, not actually listening to a friend talk and often missing the details that could make a day special. Will being home more cause us to reconsider? The importance of slowing down is one of the rare side effects of fighting the virus.

Tea: Tea has been underrated as a good tool for becoming calm. Remember the time when stopping for a cup of tea was almost a ritual? Today it can be the traditional black tea,



green tea or herbal. Most of the advice offered by professionals about getting through the pandemic recommend that we put structure and routines in our days. Tea has calming effects that reduce both stress and anxiety. Although it’s a small task, the payoff can be big. Stopping for a “spot of tea” opens up time to think and reflect on how you’re doing, taking in the thoughts and feelings you’re experiencing and finding ways to be good to yourself. Setting up a tea time with friends or family is a way to cut down on feeling isolated. “Going virtual” is one way people are sharing tea times from their own homes. WARNING! Until we can get broadband going, virtual may induce its own stress, but we know that relief is on its way...someday. Whether it’s coffee, tea or good food, there’s still time to sit outdoors, enjoy the fresh air and watch the beautiful foliage change before the cold weather slithers or slams into our lives.

BE MERRY...as much as you can

It’s hard to be merry right now, but not impossible. Some folks have been having virtual meals, birthday celebrations and other events online with friends or families by using Zoom, or similar programs. There are still live musical performances available outside, weather permitting. Facebook postings are showing more and more personal and family photos, both new and old. They

can make you smile or laugh. We need to laugh more. Laughter is a key factor in lifting our spirits, improving our breathing, reducing depression and supporting our need to stay healthy.

Enjoy your memories. Research has shown that reminiscing is an important way to connect. Now we have more time to be good to ourselves. It helps us see where we are now in our own “mall of life”. Tell more stories; we’re beginning to lose an art that has helped families through generations keep track of how connected we all are, even if it’s not in person and the here and now. A lot of people love hearing stories and seeing pictures. Well, maybe not adolescents, at a time when being seen with a parent can be embarrassing, “dorky” or weird. Some people say they’re having fun making a photo album for a grandchild. Pictures do indeed say a thousand words, including what we looked like going through our earlier years. Got any funny high school shots from the 50s or “hippie” shots from the 60s?



Under the Tent

Pop up events and restarting regular meetings help to meet without Zoom- weather permitting. Watch for postings on the post office bulletin board, the door of the Community Center or send a request to join an email list by calling 296-4007 or emailing coa@townofchesterfieldma.com.

The Council on Aging and the Northern Hilltowns Consortium of Councils on Aging successfully held their board meetings in the Veterans’ Park under a tent loaned and erected by generous friends.

Chair Yoga has been a great way to enjoy exercising in the sun surrounded by beautiful flowers and refreshing breezes. It feels good even if the sun fails to show up. A deep breath of outside air, stretching out and learning how to relax beats being inside every time- until it’s too cold to sit there for long. Even without the sun, the breathing, exercising and being with others is a good antidote to isolation.

Chair yoga



*Coffee hour
also moved outside*



Tai Chi classes are being held on the lawn in front of the town hall.

Croquet was scheduled for September 14th. Report to follow next month.

New Pop Ups? October invites thoughts of Cider and doughnuts with social distancing. What else?

Community Cupboard closes as the Little Corner Cupboard opens in new location on October. 1st

Cold weather coming, lack of heat sources and logistical problems with snow plowing have led the Community Support Team, in consultation with the Board of Health, to begin the fall at a smaller site at the entrance to the kitchen at the Community Center. It's been clear that the food that's been offered at the Cupboard has been very appreciated and needed. The need to keep it going will no doubt continue as financial hardships grow, prices of food increase and farm markets begin to close. Even with the Goshen Pantry, CISA coupons and Hilltown Bucks, food insecurity persists.

New protocols have been developed for assuring the health and safety of everyone using the cupboard in the new restricted space. The "Little Corner Cupboard" will be open twice a week on Tuesdays from 9-11am and Thursdays from 2-4pm. Volunteers are required to be on site during the open hours. Strict guidelines for social distancing and sanitizing will continue to be followed and masks are required. The goal of staying as anonymous as possible is still in effect. The duration of the program will be guided by the receipt of business and individual donations.



On August 31, we had our "kick-off" meeting with Whip City Fiber (who will be our project manager) and TriWire (who will be building the network). They explained that the build will begin with the center of Town (Fiber Service Area or FSA 3) and then progress to FSA 2, FSA 1 and FSA 4. Each FSA will be built in 6 sequential stages:

1. Placing a steel support cable on the poles
2. Attaching the fiber optic cable on the support cable
3. Placing the MST ports opposite each subscriber residence
4. Connecting each MST port to the hub
5. Testing the network
6. Quality Control testing by Whip City engineers

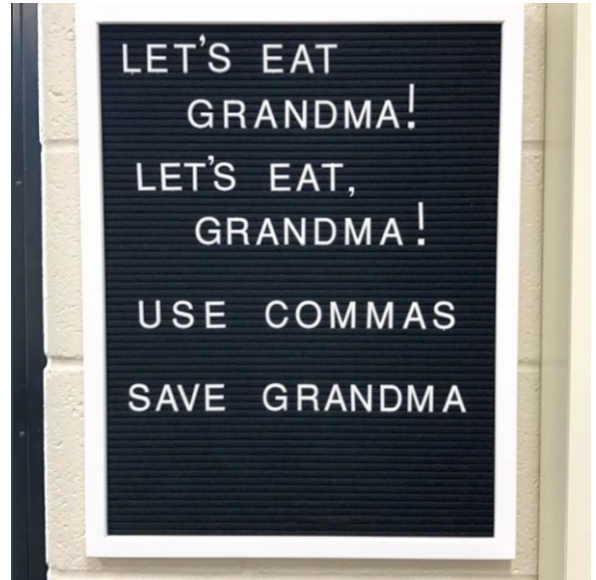
Once the FSA is certified as fully tested and operational, Customer Service will begin calling customers to schedule appointments to install the "drops" or the connections from the MST port on the pole to each house and light up that customer.

Appointments for drops (the connection between the street and each residence) will begin after the first of the year and continue throughout the spring. The drop appointments will be in the order that customers signed up. We know that there are many groups that are in urgent need of internet service, but installations should proceed quickly and prioritization would delay service.

Some Important Things to Keep in Mind:

- We have waited a long time for broadband and it can seem like just one delay after another. Everyone in the Town, in the MLP, at Whip City, and the State have been working just as hard as they can to make this happen just as soon as possible. We are all in the same boat right now, paying a premium for questionable internet and with the additional demands of school and work from home.
- We want the network to work. Making sure it is thoroughly tested and operational is important in making sure we will get good results.
- Construction is "rolling", meaning that just as soon as the steel support crew is finished in the first FSA, they will go immediately on to the next FSA and so on. The crews do not have to finish one FSA before moving on.

- Remember- winter weather is unpredictable and this could affect the schedule.
- We will keep you fully informed about the progress of the build.



Happy Birthday in October!



Elizabeth Sloan, Karl Wickland, John Lyons, Ralph Driver, Maryellen Blais, Cheryl Kress, Amy Gavalis, Christine Coderre, Thomas Kress, Maryann Young, Gerald Randall, Susan Fuller, Daphne Thompson-Addabbo, David Boyer, Francis Keefe, Michael O'Neil, Lois Hripak, Mary Wickland, John Follet, Ruth Wade, Bonnie Kellogg, Lillian Bisbee, Michael Metzger, Mary Perkins, Daniel Lamontagne, Patrick Bray, Laura Clark

The Chesterfield Council on Aging benefits from your support for our programs for Chesterfield seniors!

I would like to contribute to the Chesterfield COA. My contribution of \$_____ is attached.

(Please make out your check to "Town of Chesterfield" and write "COA programs" in the memo line; mail to Janice Gibeau, Director, Chesterfield COA, PO Box 7, Chesterfield, MA 01012.)

Name _____ Telephone _____

Address _____

Email _____

Thank you for helping support Chesterfield seniors!



Highland Valley ELDER SERVICES

**Assisting Elders, Families & Caregivers
through collaboration, education
and advocacy for 45 years.**

413-586-2000

**All programs and services still operational
during the COVID pandemic.**

Information & Referral Services

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Home Delivered Meals

Community Dining Sites

Ombudsman Services– For Nursing Facility Advocacy

Money Management Assistance

Protective Services

Case Management

Options Counseling

Transportation Concierge

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**Consumer Directed Options- Hire family/friends to
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www.highlandvalley.org

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Options Counseling provides:

- Free consultation with a certified Options Counselor.
- Unbiased information.
- One-on-one meeting, either in person, over the phone or by email, to discuss what your short and long term goals are.
- Personalized approach that ensures that your choices are respected.
- Exploration of options for paying for services.
- Referrals related to your particular needs and wishes.
- Assistance with planning the next steps.
- Information about long-term care services and supports.

**To connect with an Options Counselor contact Highland Valley Elder Services Information & Referral Department:
413-586-2000**



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Would you like to receive your newsletter, in color, by email instead of snail mail?

If so, please email Kristen at **regionalcoanews@gmail.com** to be put on the email list. Include your address so I will know which mailing list to take you off of. Thanks!

Scam Covid-style

You have to admire scammers, in some ways. They see a new thing in life and adjust their pitches to it, and quickly. For instance, did you know some scammers want you to think you can get a government stimulus check from a car dealership? They may send a check that says "COVID-19 Auto Stimulus" with space to endorse the check on the back, according to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC).

Another example. I ate inside in one restaurant and they asked me for contact information in case they need to do virus tracing, e.g., tell me there has been a potential contact with a person who tested positive for Covid-19. Well, another wrinkle from the scammers is to call and pretend to be a contact tracer and ask questions that go beyond the names of places and people you have come in contact with. A real tracer will never ask you for money or financial information.

Certainly the savvy citizens of Massachusetts would not suffer from these scary scams! Sadly, from Jan. 1 to Sept. 9 in MA, there were 5,664 fraud reports with a loss of \$2.69 million dollars. And that is just what was reported! There was a very sharp increase in cases starting in mid-March. Funny coincidence, that, timed with the virus. These data are from the FTC Covid-10 and Stimulus Reports:
public.tableau.com/profile/federal.trade.commission#!/vizhome/COVID-19andStimulusReports/Map

I'm sure you can figure out not to buy a virus testing kit, "early-release" vaccine, or a preventive or cure for Covid-19 from a phone call or email. You won't assume someone who says s/he is calling from the government (Social Security, Centers for Disease Control, etc.) has your best interests in mind. All the old safeguards still hold – don't click on email attachments, don't answer the phone from an unknown source, guard your wallet and identification., don't get pressured into paying, keep some skepticism.

Please Be Safe,
Jean O'Neil, TRIAD committee member
413-268-2228, jeanoneilmass@gmail.com

Good News!

By Deborah Hollingworth

For all of us on Medicare, it's annual Open Enrollment again. October through the first week in December....we get to go shopping...for our health care coverage. If you don't want to "shop" for different coverage, you don't have to, but there might be a better deal, that is better coverage for less money. And we all love to bargain hunt. Maybe not so much with health insurance? If I've heard it once, I've heard it dozens of times that folks just wish their coverage was simple. Perhaps in my lifetime, it will be, and we will look back on these days of chaos when health insurance companies bombarded us with their advertising as "back in the dark ages".

But in the meantime, our mailbox (and TV) is full of advertisements for health insurance because this is the season to switch if you want to.

What is all the advertising about?

When we turn 65, and we've paid into social security, or our spouse has paid into social security, we get Medicare: original Medicare A & B.

Then we can sign up for a Medicare D plan to cover our Rx, or enroll in a Medicare Advantage plan that covers Rx. Each year in the fall, during Open Enrollment, we get to change our mind and select different coverage. Many Medicare beneficiaries will decide to change their Rx coverage (their Medicare D plans). This happens a lot because the D plans change their prices, change their deductibles...even change their formularies which is the list of Rx they cover. So what was a "good" plan for you last year may not be a good plan for you next year.

An example that kept us SHINE counselors busy last year was a Humana Walmart's switch. Their \$32 x month D plan that covered a lot of Rx, changed to a \$62 x month plan for the same coverage. If folks read their mail, they were pretty upset. If they knew to call a SHINE counselor, they could "shop" the plans for the upcoming year and discover that Humana had another plan, in the \$30 x month range...which covered almost the same Rx. But you had to know this....and switch.

How does the switch work?

During Open Enrollment, you get to sign up for a new plan if you want. The new plan takes effect January 1st and cancels out your old plan. To see if you should switch, you might contact your SHINE counselor who can do a Plan search/



analysis for you and give you the contact information you need to call and enroll in a new plan.

You can call your senior center to schedule an appointment with a SHINE counselor. 'tis the season to be shoppers, if we want.

Household Hazardous Waste Collection

**Saturday, October 24, 2020,
9 am – Noon**

at Westhampton Highway Department

Create a Safe Home: Properly dispose of household hazardous waste. The Hilltown Resource Management Cooperative (HRMC) announces their annual HHW Collection Event for residents of the ten HRMC member communities of: Ashfield, Chesterfield, Cummington, Goshen, Huntington, Middlefield, Plainfield, Westhampton, Williamsburg, and Worthington.

The program is free to HRMC member-town residents, however, reservations and pre-registration is required. Pre-registration runs from October 1-18, 2020. Please email your name, street and mailing address (including town and zip code), and phone number to hrrmc@hrrmc-ma.org. Or you may phone HRMC with the above information including an email address at 413-685-5498. Note that Huntington residents are asked to provide their transfer station sticker number at the time of registration. HRMC will confirm your registration by email and send an attached confirmation letter to bring with you to the event.

Protect your home and our environment by properly disposing of old or unwanted household chemicals. Products containing lead, petroleum products, pesticides, herbicides, and acids should NOT be poured on the ground, down the drain, or placed in household trash.

The HRMC HHW collection program accepts a wide range of unwanted household products with labels that indicate that special handling is required. Examples of common warnings include "caustic, toxic, corrosive, poison, flammable, warning, danger, caution and keep out of reach of children and pets."



Make your home a safer home by changing your purchasing habits, and adopting some minor changes to the way you clean your home or care for lawns and gardens.

For more information on recycling, visit the "What to do With" link at: www.hrrmc-ma.org

Epidemics

The world today seems to find us more stressed and frightened than COVID-19 can explain. The unrest, divisions and anger seeping into the fabric of our lives leaves us hoping, if not longing, to find a way to understand how we got here and what's in the future. Sarah Prince, our yoga teacher, found a passage from Ayurveda, an ancient system of health maintenance. Today it is often referred to as the sister science of yoga. The main text, Charaka Samhita, written 2,000-2,500 years ago, is primarily a discourse between Atreya (a great Ayurvedic physician) and his disciple Agnivesa. It was first written in Sanskrit in a poetic style, as are all Vedic texts. The rhythm, meter and melody of the Vedas allowed for easier memorization.

The Root Cause of Epidemic

Agnivesa asks Atreya, "What is the root cause of Vata imbalance, which is the root cause of an epidemic?" This was Atreya's response (remember, these are written in poetic form, over 2,200 years ago):

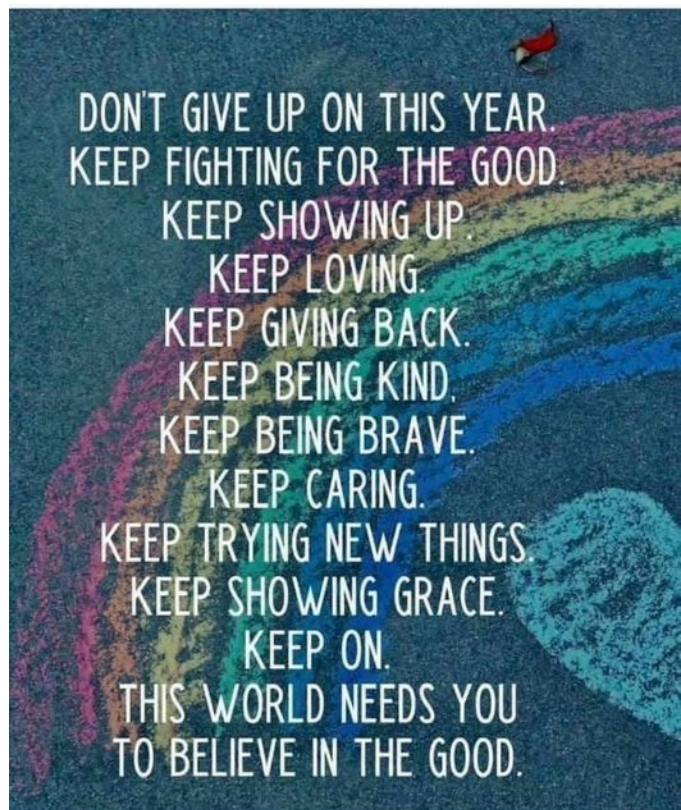
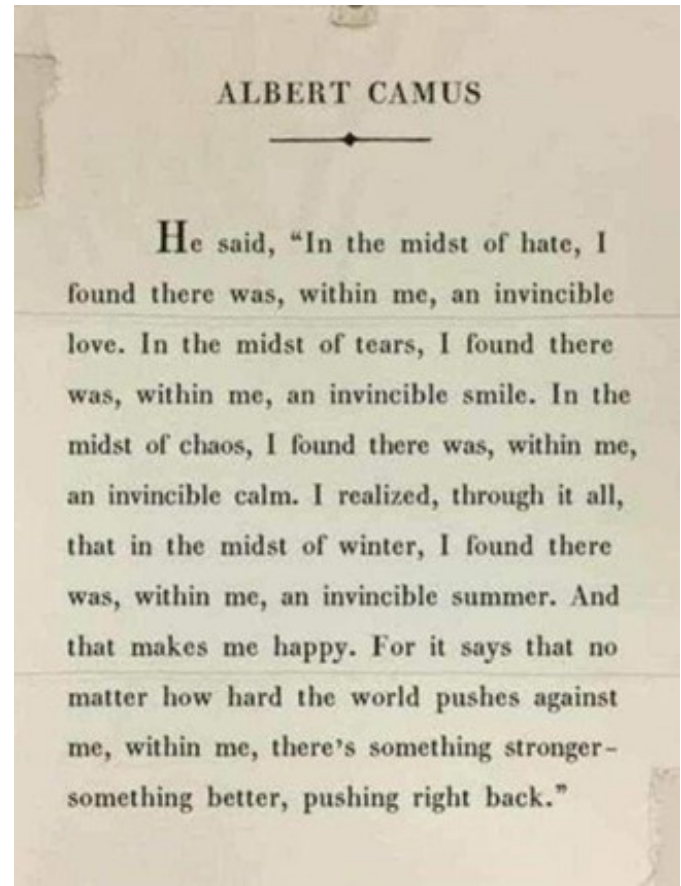
The root cause of derangement of vata and epidemic is unrighteousness. When the Heads of country, city, guild and community have transgressed the virtuous path and deal unrighteously with the people, their officers and subordinates, the people of the city and community, and merchants carry this unrighteousness further.

Thus, the unrighteousness puts pressure on and forces righteousness to disappear. Then the people with righteousness, having disappeared, are abandoned even by the Gods. Consequently, when righteousness has disappeared, unrighteousness has the upper hand and the Gods have deserted the place, the seasons get affected and because of this, it does not rain on time or at all. There is abnormal rainfall, winds do not flow properly, the land is affected, water reservoirs are dried up, and herbs, giving up their natural properties, acquire morbidity or die. Then epidemics break out due to polluted environment and food.

Likewise, unrighteousness is also cause of the destruction of community by weapons. Those who have excessively increased greed, anger, attachment, and conceit, disregarding the weak, attack each other.

Sharma, PV Charaka Samhita, Vimanasthanum, Ch. 3. Verses 20, 21 Chaukham-ba Orientalia. Delhi. 1981

During this challenging time everyone who looks for truth and the right thing to do and does it will bring balance back to our planet.



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Newsletter Designer:
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This Newsletter is sponsored in part by a grant from The Executive Office of Elder Affairs.

October is Fall Prevention Month

CATCH YOURSELF! Simple Steps to Prevent Falls

Your risk of falling increases when you have:

- fallen before
- balance problems
- chronic diseases
- depression
- hazards in the home
- a lot of medications
- memory problems
- muscle weakness

Reduce your risk of falling and stay independent, healthy and strong by following these steps:

1. **Get a fall risk assessment.** Talk to your doctor about your fall risk, especially if you have any of the conditions above.
2. **Review your medications.** Bring all your meds and supplements to your doctor or pharmacist at least once a year and when there are changes in your health. Ask about side effects and interactions, especially if you take four or more meds.
3. **Have your vision checked** once a year by an eye doctor.
4. **Engage in regular physical activity.** Ask your doctor about the best activities for you and make a plan. Doing Strength and balance exercises using your lower body can build your strength, improve your balance and coordination, and reduce your risk of falling.
5. **Assess your home and make changes for safety.** Use a home safety checklist or talk with a professional to look for things inside your home that make you more likely to fall. Change your home to make it safer; reduce clutter, improve lighting in rooms, hallways and stairwells; and install handrails and grab bars.

For more information, visit: www.stopfalls.org.