

Quarterly Companion

AROUND THE TABLE

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FALL 2024

Prevent Falls This Holiday Season

Slips and falls can happen any time of year. However, during winter, there is an increase in the rate of fall-related injuries, such as fractures, concussions, and sprains.

Fall Risk Factors

Many factors increase our risk of falling, such as reduced muscle strength, poor balance, impaired vision, changes in cognition, use of multiple medications, chronic health conditions, inadequate footwear, and fear of falling. Other factors include poor lighting, slippery or wet floors, rugs, and clutter.

Steps to Prevent Falls

Consume a balanced diet. A balanced diet will help your body get the nutrients needed to maintain health. Being intentional about including foods rich in calcium and vitamin D is vital for good bone health. However, you may need dietary supplements to ensure adequate calcium and vitamin D.

Limit sodium intake. Eating high-sodium foods can increase calcium loss through the kidneys and put you at risk for bone loss. If you struggle to get adequate calcium in your diet, limiting foods high in sodium helps preserve the calcium you consume.

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Be physically active. Getting at least 30 minutes of physical activity most days of the week will help strengthen and maintain your muscles and improve flexibility and range of motion, which will help you do all those everyday activities around the house.

Slow down. Take small, slow steps if you walk on icy or slick surfaces. Watch for ice on steps and walkways, and be careful when getting in and out of vehicles.

Clear walkways. Remove snow and ice from walkways. Adding sand or salt will improve traction on slippery surfaces.

Wear proper footwear. Whether indoors or out, wearing proper footwear is a must. Wear footwear that fits properly and provides ankle support and adequate traction.

Written by Diane Reinhold, MPH, MS, RDN, nutrition and wellness educator.

Finding an Awe-Struck Life

Research suggests that the feeling of awe can make you happier, healthier, humbler, and more connected to the people around you. Some suggest that we can sharpen our brains. Here are a few suggestions on how to find more daily experiences of awe:

1. Watch videos and past videos of fun trips or places you would like to travel to.
2. Read a story about someone traveling to a location you want to visit.

3. Take a walk, listen, breathe in, ground your feet, shift your awareness, and let your attention be open in exploration.
4. Take time each day to reflect on the things you are thankful for, whether it's the warm weather, the breeze on your face, or laughing with your loved ones.
5. Visit or travel somewhere new. It might be the local museum or attending a senior center event.
6. Connecting with others. When we share achievements and experiences, it can deepen our sense of connection.
7. Find your childlike wonder. Think about how you approach each day with childlike curiosity. It is okay to feel surprised and be inspired by life.

To cultivate awe, here are a few questions to answer:

1. What experiences filled you with a sense of happiness and inspiration?
2. When did you forget how late it was because you were enjoying someone's company?
3. Find a photo that you have around your house and write about what it is about the image that brings you joy.
4. Sit outside and write down what you notice around you.

Submitted by: Tessa Hobbs-Curley, family life educator.

Resource: bit.ly/40LNYKj

Winter Energy-Saving Ideas

Learn some ways to cut costs on your energy bill this winter. Some free ways to conserve energy can be as simple as opening your curtains on south-facing windows to allow sunlight to naturally heat the home and close the curtains at night to reduce the chill from the windows. Also, covering drafty windows and using window treatments or coverings can improve energy efficiency. Look for opportunities to make small savings around the house by reducing unnecessary energy use.

Unscramble the hints for more energy-saving tips (answer key below):

1. _____ (LESA) air leaks with caulk or weatherstripping.
2. Use the _____ (DCLO) cycle when washing clothes.
3. _____ (JATSUD) or program your thermostat as low as comfortable while home.
4. Replace furnace _____ (SEFRTIL) as needed.
5. Decorate with _____ (GEREYN) efficient light bulbs

Read more about fall and winter energy-saving tips from the U.S. Department of Energy: bit.ly/4hKn0zc

Submitted by: Jamie Mahlandt, financial educator.

Answer Key to Winter
energy-saving ideas:
1. SEAL 4. FILTERS
2. COLD 5. ENERGY
3. ADJUST

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