

# TO YOUR HEALTH

Volume 27, Number 9



September 2021

## Falls Prevention by Emily Robinson, NP

Along with the promise of cooler temperatures, September brings Falls Prevention Week. The risk of falls increases with age, with 1 in 4 older adults falling each year, and a single fall can dramatically change a person's life. Falls do not have to be an inevitability of aging and there are simple steps that can be taken to significantly reduce the risk of falling.

As we age, it can feel natural to limit activity or stay home in the hope of preventing a fall. In fact, falls are more likely to happen in the home setting and maintaining strength, flexibility and balance are essential to reducing risk of falls. Engaging in an



appropriate, consistent exercise program provides a myriad of

health benefits, including reduction in falls. For many, there is a fear and uncertainty around the safest way to exercise, particularly if it has been many years since engaging in regular activity. The best place to start is with your primary care provider, who can make a referral to a physical therapist.

Physical therapists can create programs specific to fall prevention that include balance, strengthening and flexibility, and can help jumpstart a routine that you can continue on your own. Additionally, there are

group exercise classes targeted toward balance and fall prevention that are highly beneficial to all older adults, even those who already exercise regularly.



It is also important to review your medications, including over-the-counter, with your primary care provider. Many medications and over-the-counter regimens increase fall risk through side effects or interactions, including dizziness, sleepiness or confusion. This risk is particularly high when you first start taking a new medication. Regular vision and hearing checks are also important to overall health and reduction of fall risk.

Given that most falls occur in the home setting, it is important to review your home for fall hazards, such as area rugs, clutter, and poor lighting. Additionally, identify areas where equipment such as grab bars and handrails can enhance safety. It is also important to use prescribed walking devices, such as canes and walkers, both outside and inside your home. Speak to your primary care provider if you notice changes in your gait or experience near-falls and feel you might benefit from an assistive device. A referral to physical therapy provides tremendous benefit for identifying the safest device and learning how to use it properly.

You can assess your own risk of falls through the Falls Free Checkup on the website for the National Council on Aging. After taking this self-assessment, reach out

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to your primary care provider to create a personal plan for fall prevention. Please remember that a single fall increases your risk for subsequent falls. Reporting a fall to your primary care provider can be difficult, but it is the most important step for preventing more in the future.



*(There are smarter ways to guard against falls)*

## Covid Loss and Recovery Group

The Clinic will be offering five sessions on Covid Loss and Recovery. Each session will focus on a theme relating to the pandemic. This will be a small group of no more than 10 participants. You can attend all or just a few sessions.

- **Grief Deferred:** Mourning Losses and Experiencing Isolation
- **Adapting to the Pandemic:** Rituals and Relationships
- **Mind Matters:** Wellness and Wisdom during the Pandemic
- **The Creative Life:** Pandemic Past Times
- **Moving Forward:** Tools for Reentry and Recovery

**Day:** Wednesday

**Time:** 2pm

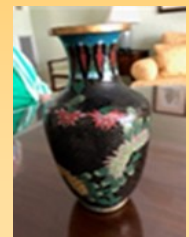
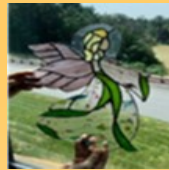
**Location:** Bedford Room

**Dates:** 10/6, 10/20, 11/3, 11/17, 12/1

Please call Maeve Lobo (ext.1316) at the Clinic for more details and registration. You can also email at [mlobo@cwvillage.org](mailto:mlobo@cwvillage.org)

## What Cheers Us Up?

The Woman's Circle met last month and talked about experiences and items that cheer them up. One of the group members commented on the gift of time that has allowed her to explore ideas and encounter new things in life. The creative life, cherishing memories, reading and assembling a collection were all part of this conversation.



## Changes in the Clinic

Dr. Sunita Hanjura has been providing primary care to many Residents at Carleton-Willard for over 12 years. We greatly appreciate all that she has contributed to the health of this community. After September she will no longer be coming to Carleton-Willard.

Beginning mid-September a new physician will be joining Carleton-Willard. Dr. Jose Gutierrez will be accepting new Residents in the Nursing Center and Llewysac only. Dr. Gutierrez has experience as a hospitalist before shifting his time to provide post acute rehab care and long term care. At this time he will not have Clinic hours.