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**Sauk County Seeing an Increase in Falls Among Residents Age 65+**

Sauk County is seeing an increase in residents ages 65+ being seen at hospitals for fall-related injuries. According to the CDC, one in four older adults fall each year, and nation-wide, 3 million older adults are treated in emergency departments for a fall injury each year. With the recent weather being warmer during the day and dropping below freezing at night, conditions are prime for creating ice on doorsteps, sidewalks, driveways, and parking lots.

**Sauk County’s Aging & Disability Resource Center (ADRC) and Public Health staff are recommending older adults reduce their chances of falling by:**

* Talking to your healthcare provider if you have fallen, if you feel unsteady when standing or walking, or if you’re afraid you might fall.
* Ask your doctor or pharmacist to review your medications to see if they might increase your risk of falling.
* Have your eyes checked annually and update your eyeglasses, if needed.
* Stay active. Do exercises that make your legs stronger and improve your balance.
* Make your home safer. Get rid of trip hazards. Keep floors clutter free. Add grab bars in the bathroom. Use handrails on stairs.
* Ask for help if needed to clear walkways. Use salt to melt ice, or use sand/kitty litter to provide traction.

“Falls are preventable,” shares Marina Wittmann, Aging Program Coordinator at the ADRC of Sauk County. “If you or someone you love are age 60 or older and are interested in learning more about how to prevent a fall, consider joining a Stepping On for Falls Prevention Workshop. Contact the ADRC at 608-355-3289 for information.”

**Tips for Safer Winter Walking:**

* Plan ahead. Give yourself plenty of time. Choose walkways that are dry and clear.
* Wear shoes that provide traction on snow or ice.
* When entering buildings, remove snow and water from footwear to prevent wet slippery conditions indoors.
* When given no choice but to walk on slippery areas, walk like a penguin:
	+ Bend slightly and walk flat footed, keeping your center of gravity over your feet as much as possible.
	+ Point your feet out slightly, like a penguin.
	+ Shuffle your feet and take short steps. Watch where you are stepping. Concentrate on keeping your balance.

**For more information, visit:**

* Sauk County Aging and Disability Resource Center Prevention Programs: <https://www.co.sauk.wi.us/adrc/prevention-programs>
	+ Stepping On for Falls Prevention: <https://www.co.sauk.wi.us/sites/default/files/fileattachments/aging_and_disability_resource_center/page/1720/stepping_on_brochure_2023.pdf>
* CDC Older Adult Fall Prevention: <https://www.cdc.gov/injury/features/older-adult-falls/index.html>

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