

# Health and Welfare Alert



Ohio Administrative Code 5123:2-17-02 requires all developmental disabilities employees to review Health and Welfare Alerts released by the department as part of annual training. All previous alerts are listed on the department's website.

## Preventing Falls #20-6-17

Having a developmental disability might put a person at greater risk for falling if they have a vision impairment, muscle weakness, gait and balance difficulties, use multiple medications for multiple diagnoses or medications with sedative effects, or have a sedentary lifestyle.

Risk of falling can stem from seizure disorder, incontinence, orthostatic hypotension (sudden drop in blood pressure), vertigo, peripheral neuropathy (lack of feeling), or dehydration.

Age can also be a factor. Falls are the leading cause of injury-related hospitalization and death among Ohioans 65 years and older.

### Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

Falls are the most common cause of traumatic brain injuries (TBI)

### Smart prevention habits

#### Remove sources of tripping

- Secure cords away from walking areas, and use non-skid rugs

#### Stay focused and informed

- Don't carry large loads, which can obstruct vision and affect balance
- Know multi-focal glasses can affect how someone judges distance
- Make sure clothing and shoes fit
- Have a pharmacist review medications for side effects
- Encourage increased exercise to build strength

#### Be aware of environmental risks

- Keep one hand free to hold handrail when carrying items
  - Clean up any spills immediately
- #### Keep stairways safe
- Every staircase should have a sturdy handrail on at least one side
  - Be sure stairways are well lit
  - Don't store items in stairwells or hang things on handrails



**STEADY U Ohio** is a statewide collaborative falls prevention initiative supported by government and state business partners to ensure that every county, community, and Ohioan knows how to prevent falls.

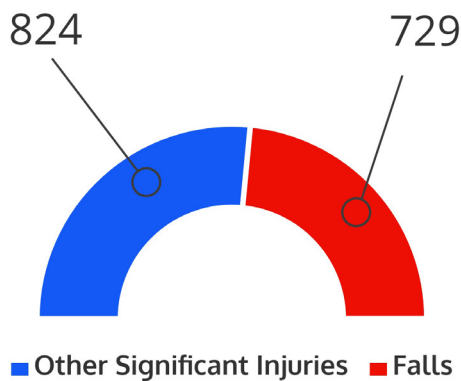
#### Learn more:

[aging.ohio.gov/steadyU](http://aging.ohio.gov/steadyU)



## Fast Stats

Significant Injury MUIs in 2016



**Out of 1,553 total significant injuries reported to DODD in 2016, there were 729 falls.**

A significant injury Major Unusual Incident (MUI) is an injury from a known or unknown cause that is not considered abuse or neglect and that results in concussion, broken bone, dislocation, second or third degree burns, or that requires immobilization, casting, or five or more sutures.

**6** Ohioans with developmental disabilities died in 2016 from falls

**\$1.9 billion** in medical costs and work lost annually in Ohio due to falls