

Adult Foster Home Provider Alert

Policy updates, rule clarifications and announcements

Date: Sep. 24, 2024

To: APD Adult Foster Home Providers

From: ODHS Office of Aging and People with Disabilities
Population Health Quality Improvement

Topic: **Fall Prevention Guide for Oregon AFHs**

The ODHS Office of Aging and People with Disabilities (APD) is pleased to announce the release of a comprehensive Fall Prevention Resource Guide designed for APD-licensed Adult Foster Homes (AFHs). This guide aims to support effective assessment and prevention of falls among residents, thereby enhancing their safety and well-being. Falls are a leading cause of injury among older adults and people with disabilities, and this resource guide offers practical tools and strategies to reduce these risks, creating a safer living environment for all residents.

Risk factors to help identify residents at risk of falling

Residents of your home who have any of these conditions or health histories are at a higher risk of falling:

- **Medical Conditions:** Chronic conditions such as arthritis, diabetes, Parkinson's disease and cardiovascular issues can impair balance and mobility.
- **Medications:** Certain medications like sedatives, antidepressants and antipsychotics can cause dizziness, drowsiness or low blood pressure. Regular medication reviews with healthcare providers can mitigate these risks.
- **Vision Impairment:** Poor vision, including cataracts, glaucoma or age-related macular degeneration increases the risk of tripping and falling.

APD means Aging and People with Disabilities. APD adult foster homes are licensed to care for adults who are older and adults with physical disabilities.

- **Hearing Impairment:** Untreated hearing loss may affect the safety of the resident and can increase the risk of an accidental fall.
- **History of Falls:** Residents who have fallen before are more likely to fall again. A thorough assessment of past falls can help identify specific risk factors.
- **Muscle Weakness and Balance Issues:** Decreased muscle strength, especially in the legs, and poor balance are significant contributors to falls. Regular physical activity can help improve strength and balance.
- **Environmental Hazards:** Cluttered living spaces, slippery floors and poor lighting are common environmental risks in home settings.

How to keep your home environment safe for residents at risk of falling

- Keep all walkways clear of clutter, cords and loose rugs to prevent tripping.
- Ensure all areas, especially stairways and hallways, are well-lit. Consider using night lights in bedrooms and bathrooms.
- Wear slip-resistant footwear. Shoes with non-skid soles provide better traction and stability. Being barefoot is not safer!
- Place grab bars in bathrooms near toilets and in showers or tubs. Install handrails on both sides of staircases to provide support.
- Use non-slip mats in the bathroom, kitchen and other areas prone to getting wet.
- Ensure all carpets and rugs are firmly secured to the floor. Use double-sided tape or non-slip backing.
- Repair any loose floorboards, tiles or steps immediately to prevent accidents.
- Arrange furniture to allow clear walking paths and avoid sharp corners.

Home assessment resources

- Use the [home fall prevention checklist](#) to easily assess and make your home safe.
- Check out the [home safety self-assessment tool](#) for a more detailed assessment.
- For a paid home assessment, search for “home safety evaluation for adults in Oregon” to find various programs and business that offer these services.

Supports to help AFH and the resident feel safer

Programs for AFH residents (many available virtually):

APD means Aging and People with Disabilities. APD adult foster homes are licensed to care for adults who are older and adults with physical disabilities.

- [Fall Prevention Workshops](#) (delivered via AAAs and community organizations)
- [Exercise Programs](#) – find nearest AAA in your community to find out about the balance and exercise programs they have.
- [My Mobility Plan](#) – what you can do to stay independent.
- [Chair Exercise to Strengthen Muscles](#)
- [Standing Heel Raises for Leg Strength](#)
- [Lunges for Leg Strength](#)
- [Standing on One Leg Exercise to Improve Balance](#)
- [Side Stepping Exercise to Improve Balance](#)
- [Backward Walking Exercise to Improve Balance](#)
- [Map of Tai Chi Classes in Oregon](#)

How to assist residents in fall prevention

- Encourage residents to discuss falls with their primary care physician.
- Advocate for referrals to physical therapy (PT) or occupational therapy (OT). Occupational therapists can access home environments and provide personalized recommendations to reduce fall risks. OTs/PTs require a referral from a healthcare provider.
- Collaborate with case managers on assistive equipment. Case managers can help residents secure the right assistive equipment for their needs.

Fall trainings for AFH providers

- [Online training from the CDC](#)
- [Online tips from the National Institute on Aging](#)
- [Online classes and in-person workshops from Oregon Care Partners](#)

If interested in further certifications, search for “certifications for fall prevention” to find various programs that offer Fall Prevention Specialist certificate services.

If you have additional questions, please email APD’s Population Health Team at apd.populationhealth@odhsoha@oregon.gov.

APD means Aging and People with Disabilities. APD adult foster homes are licensed to care for adults who are older and adults with physical disabilities.