

SENIOR SAFETY NEWS

Salt Lake Valley Health Department
Injury Prevention Program

SUMMER 2009

September: Healthy Aging Month

While I was working with Salt Lake County Healthy Aging Program during the 1990's, I encountered the national "Healthy Aging" initiative, geared toward older adults wanting to avoid some of the chronic diseases that seem to be "part and parcel" of the aging process. Healthy Aging addresses the whole person by specifically looking at physical fitness, mental wellness, financial fitness, and social wellbeing as well as nutritional health. The national observance was developed to add another month of senior awareness besides May as "Older Americans Month". You may view helpful suggestions on the website, www.healthyaging.net.

Physical fitness is as important for older adults as it is for younger counterparts. Regular exercise strengthens muscles and bones, improves balance and even helps sleep and mood. Yet there can be limitations to exercise. A visit with your doctor is the first step, to find out what to avoid as much as what to include. Most people, by the

way, can incorporate walking into their daily routine.

Mental wellness ensures that you have the ability to handle your daily responsibilities whether at home, in volunteer duties or on the job. Memory and dementia fall into this category as well, so engaging in stimulating mental exercises helps.

Financial fitness allows you to rest assured you'll have housing, medical services, and a fairly worry-free life well into your nineties (and beyond). Stay on top of bank/investment accounts. Read statements. Avoid "too good to be true" claims—research possible investments.

Social wellbeing includes a large personal network of family members, friends and neighbors, who keep you on-track with healthy goals. A good friend provides a shoulder to cry on, laughs with you often and provides helpful suggestions without judgment. Senior centers and senior housing provide resources to foster such a network. —Carol Avery

One Small Change

Salt Lake Valley Health Department has unveiled their new campaign, "one small change", to encourage Utahns to think of one thing they can do now to improve their health. Suggestions from the website, www.slvhealth.org, include: parking farther away from stores to increase number of steps in a day, increasing the amount of fruits and vegetables in a meal, using seatbelts, choosing a fiber-rich cereal over a sugary one and joining an exercise class. Make your one small change today by selecting a small, doable goal and then...do it!



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Summer Observances

July— *UV Safety Month*

Aug— *Cataract Awareness*

8/9-15: *National Health Center Week*

Sept— *Healthy Aging Month*
Whole Grains Month

9/6-12: *National Suicide Prevention Month*

9/21-27: *Americans on the Move*

Sept. 21: *World Alzheimer's Day*

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**Look for us on
the web
www.slvhealth.org**

Senior Safety Programs

Senior Safety Bingo:

a great way to combine safety information with the familiar game of Bingo. Plus, everyone's guaranteed to win!



Call 801-313-6606 to schedule

Fall Prevention Display:

a portable exhibit to feature in your health or resource fair. It's chock full of samples of safety-minded products and brochures.

Remember When:

three structured learning activities combining reminiscence with important safety messages about fire and fall prevention. Developed by Centers for Disease Control and National Fire Prevention Association. Educational and fun!

Schedule one or all three of the following:

- ◇ "As Time Goes By" — reminiscence comparing home and personal safety measures in place when participants were children and teens with safe practices in place today.
- ◇ "Sentimental Journey to Safety" — a trivia quiz challenges knowledge of entertainers, music, history/geography of a bygone era. Bonus questions test participants' knowledge about personal safety.
- ◇ "Name That Hazard" — a rousing guessing game using common household items. Are they safe or not?

Vial of Life: an emergency medical information program that links your health data with medical workers responding to a 9-1-1 call from your home. It's free and confidential. To schedule a presentation/sign-up call 801- 313-6606.

CarFit: 12-point inspection to determine how safely a senior driver is adapted to his or her car. Developed by AAA and AARP, the fifteen minute session is usually performed in a parking lot, with the driver at the wheel. It includes optimal mirror adjustments, as well as steering wheel tilt, safe distance from airbag, etc. Call 801-313-6606 for more information.

Revamped & Revitalized!

It's our website — completely overhauled in the past few months, now open to the public. Access fall prevention information/resources by typing in the top web address box: www.slvhealth.org/programs/injuryPrevention/seniorFallPrevention/index.html. Bookmark it as a favorite for easy access.

