

# FALLS PREVENTION

*Tips to stay healthy and avoid falls*



*This brochure was created for the community by the  
Martha's Vineyard Falls Prevention Coalition:*

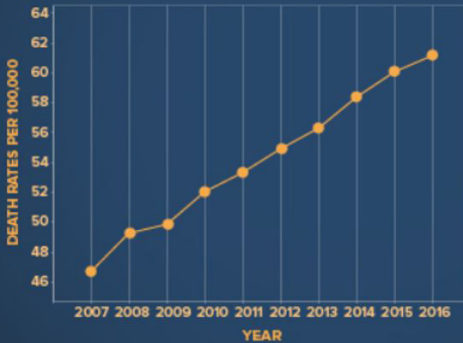
CHILMARK BOARD OF HEALTH • EDGARTOWN COUNCIL ON AGING  
ELDER SERVICES OF CAPE COD AND THE ISLANDS

HEALTHY AGING MARTHA'S VINEYARD • ISLAND HEALTH CARE COMMUNITY CENTER  
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UP ISLAND COUNCIL ON AGING • VINEYARD COMPLEMENTARY MEDICINE  
VNA OF CAPE COD - MARTHA'S VINEYARD OFFICE • YMCA HEALTHY AGERS

# *Did you know?*

## Fall Death Rates in the U.S. **INCREASED 30%**

FROM 2007 TO 2016 FOR OLDER ADULTS



Learn more at [www.cdc.gov/HomeandRecreationalSafety](http://www.cdc.gov/HomeandRecreationalSafety).

If rates continue to rise,  
we can anticipate

**7 FALL  
DEATHS**  
EVERY HOUR  
BY 2030



- 1 out of 5 of Older Adult Islanders report falling in the last year, and this increases to 4 out of 10 for those 85+.
- 20% of falls cause a serious injury such as broken bones or a head injury.
- Each year, 3 million older people are treated in emergency departments for fall injuries.
- More than 95% of hip fractures are caused by falling, usually by falling sideways.

data sources: [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) + HAMV Older Adult Survey 2020

# *YOU CAN prevent falls*



**1. Have your vision checked**



**2. Keep moving**



**3. Make your home safer**



**4. Talk to your doctor and  
review medications**



# HAVE YOUR VISION CHECKED

*When was your last eye exam?*

You should have your vision checked at least once a year. Poor vision can increase your chances of falling.

## *Island Optometrists:*

Dr. George A. Santos Optometry  
638 Main St., Vineyard Haven, MA 02568  
508-693-7222  
Medicare accepted

Finkelstein & Shea Optometrists  
28 State Road, Vineyard Haven, MA 02568  
508-693-3517  
[www.drsfinkelsteinandshea.com](http://www.drsfinkelsteinandshea.com)  
Medicare & Medicaid accepted

Visual A-Specs  
#14 7th Street North, Edgartown, MA 02539  
508-627-1342  
[www.vineyardoptician.com](http://www.vineyardoptician.com)  
Medicare & Medicaid accepted



# KEEP MOVING

Physical activity is one of the most important ways to reduce your chance of falling. Household chores, taking a walk and gardening will help reduce your fall risk. Exercises help to improve balance and strengthen your muscles.

Ask your doctor or healthcare provider about the best type of exercise program before you begin.

## *Available Resources:*

Vineyard Complementary Medicine offers a free 20-minute evaluation to determine how to achieve pain-free movement and better balance. Call 508-687-9800 or email [info@vcmpmt.com](mailto:info@vcmpmt.com) to arrange an appointment.

YMCA of Martha's Vineyard  
508-696-7171  
[www.ymcamv.org/healthy-agers](http://www.ymcamv.org/healthy-agers)

Contact your local Council on Aging for a list of exercise, yoga, and fitness classes available to you.

Visit: FirstStopMV for a list of fitness classes:  
[www.firststopmv.org/provider-category/elder-fitness](http://www.firststopmv.org/provider-category/elder-fitness)



# MAKE YOUR HOME SAFER

*About half of all falls happen at home, often resulting in serious injury and/or hospitalization.*

## **Consider the following adaptations to make your home a safer place:**

- Remove items that you can trip over such as: rugs, electrical wires, cords, books, etc.
- Consider grab bars next to your toilet, tub, shower and through out the house.
- Improve lighting in your home. Use light-sensored night lights.

## *HOME SAFETY MODIFICATION PILOT PROGRAM*

### **What is it?**

A pilot program to provide housing modifications to island homeowners 65 years and older. It is sponsored by HAMV in partnership with the Martha's Vineyard Building Association, funded by local organizations and donations.

### **What types of home safety modifications are included?**

Low cost, high impact modifications such as installation of grab bars, stairwell handrails (indoors and outdoors), traction or non-skid strips, interior and exterior lighting, and smoothing floor surfaces.

### **How can I learn more?**

Call your COA to complete a simple application OR contact Cindy Trish [ctrish@hamv.org](mailto:ctrish@hamv.org) or call her at (508) 693-7900 ext 455 for more information.



# TALK TO YOUR DOCTOR

Ask your doctor or healthcare provider to evaluate your risk for falling, and talk with them about specific things you can do.

## *Review your medications*

Some medications or combinations of medicine can make you sleepy or dizzy, increasing the chances of a fall. Have your doctor or pharmacist review all of the medications you take, even over-the-counter medications, and supplements.

## *Let your doctor know if...*

- You have any trouble walking or if you ever feel off-balance
- You have any weakness or other problems with your legs
- You have any new medications or any changes in your current medications.

**Those who take 5+ medications a day have a higher risk of falling.**

# Important Numbers

Edgartown Council on Aging (The Anchors).....508-627-4368  
10 Daggett Street, Edgartown

Elder Services of Cape Cod and Islands.....1-800-244-4630  
MV Office: 1 Hospital Road, Oak Bluffs.....508-693-4393

Healthy Aging Martha's Vineyard.....508-693-7900  
Home Safety Modification Program.....Ext 455

Island Health Care Community Health Center...508-939-9358  
245 Edgartown-Vineyard Haven Road, Edgartown

Martha's Vineyard Center for Living.....508-939-9440  
29 Breakdown Lane, Vineyard Haven

Martha's Vineyard Community Services.....508-693-7900  
CORE.....Ext 210  
111 Edgartown Road, Vineyard Haven

Oak Bluffs Council on Aging.....508-693-4509  
21 Wamsutta Avenue, Oak Bluffs

Tisbury Council on Aging.....508-696-4205  
34 Pine Tree Road, Vineyard Haven

Up-Island Council on Aging (Howes House).....508-693-2896  
1042 State Road, West Tisbury

VNA of Cape Cod - Martha's Vineyard Office.....508-957-7400

Vineyard Complementary Medicine.....508-693-3800

YMCA Healthy Agers.....508-696-7171  
111R Edgartown Road, Vineyard Haven



**Healthy Aging Martha's Vineyard**

Making Martha's Vineyard an Aging-Friendly Island