



Creating Solutions, Changing Lives!

## Healthy Lifestyles!

Easter Seals New Jersey  
Healthy Lifestyles

SEPTEMBER / OCTOBER

Falls Prevention  
Breast Cancer Awareness

### Dates to Remember:

- **Friday 10/4**  
3rd Annual Disability Pride Parade, Trenton
- **Thursday 10/24**  
65th Anniversary Celebration & Annual RVW Awards Dinner

To learn more  
about the above, visit  
[eastersealsnj.org/events](http://eastersealsnj.org/events)

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### Preventing Falls

The 6th annual National Falls Prevention Awareness Day, observed on September 22nd, 2013, is aimed to promote and increase public awareness about how to prevent and reduce falls among older adults.

A fall is defined as an event which results in a person coming to rest inadvertently on the ground or floor or other lower level. It is a loss of balance which results in uncontrolled contact with a surface or object. Some falls result in injuries, and can cause pain and suffering and impact quality of life.

According to the National Council on Aging (NCOA), falling is **not** an inevitable result of aging. Through evidence-based interventions and practical lifestyle adjustments, the number of falls among seniors can be substantially reduced.

**Individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, their families, and care providers can be proactive to reduce the risk for falls.**

Potential risk factors for falls for individuals with developmental disabilities include: age, gender, level of intellectual disability, health, seizures, ambulatory status, adaptive and maladaptive behaviors, use of antipsychotic drugs, and type of residential setting.

### 6 Tips to Help to Prevent Falls

- **Find a good balance and exercise program which is taught by a qualified exercise professional:** Look to build balance, strength, and flexibility. Contact your local Area Agency on Aging for referrals. Find a program you like and take a friend.
- **Talk to your health care provider:** Ask for an assessment of your risk of falling. Share your history of recent falls.
- **Regularly review your medications with your doctor or pharmacist:** Make sure side effects aren't increasing your risk of falling. Take medications only as prescribed.
- **Get your vision and hearing checked annually and update your eyeglasses:** Your eyes and ears are key to keeping you on your feet.
- **Keep your home safe:** Remove tripping hazards, increase lighting, make stairs safe, and install grab bars in key areas.
- **Talk to your family members:** Enlist their support in taking simple steps to stay safe. Falls are *not* just an issue affecting only seniors.



To learn more, visit [ncoa.org/FallsPrevention](http://ncoa.org/FallsPrevention).

## October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month!



### Screening saves lives!

Many women can survive breast cancer if it's found and treated early. A mammogram – the screening test for breast cancer – can help find breast cancer early. All women are advised to have regular breast exams and mammograms.

*New recommendation: If you are between 40-49 years old, talk to your doctor about when and how often to get a mammogram. If you are 50-74 years old, get a mammogram every two years.*

Mammograms are performed at clinics, hospitals, and doctor's offices. For help scheduling an appointment, call your doctor's office.

### Discuss Disability-Related Concerns

Discussing your disability related concerns with your healthcare provider can increase awareness and sensitivity and reduce barriers that prevent many women with disabilities from obtaining early cancer detection services.

A team approach consisting of the individual with a disability, the caregiver, primary healthcare provider, and radiologists and staff at the mammography center may give the individual confidence and reduce stress and trauma associated with uncomfortable medical procedures.



### Members of the Developmental Disabilities Nurses Association shared tips to help empower people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their caregivers to have an active role in preventive care:

- Talk about breast exams and how to recognize when something is different from how it usually is. Discuss with peers who have already had a mammogram.
- Help women prepare for mammograms and pelvic exams by providing education and relaxation skills.
- Practice undressing, putting on the gown, leaning up against a fake machine. Walk through the entire procedure. Let them know them in advance the machine might be cold, and that they may experience some discomfort.
- Mobile "mammo" vans are a great resource for education and an opportunity to tour/familiarize individuals with the "sights and sounds" they can expect during a mammogram. The American Cancer Society and a local hospital community education program may provide information on accessing the vans.
- Ask your primary health care provider to help arrange a mammography appointment.
- When scheduling the appointment ask to speak to the office manager of the diagnostic/imaging center and arrange a visit to the facility in advance. Ask a staff member to show you the machines and explain the procedure prior to the date of the scheduled mammogram.
- Have a family member or friend schedule a mammogram at the same time. The shared experience may make the procedure less stressful.
- Let the scheduling staff, radiology technicians, or radiologist know whether you can/cannot sit upright with or without assistance, lift and move your arms, transfer from your chair/scooter, undress/dress without assistance, etc.



**Are you worried about the cost or currently don't have health insurance?**

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program (NBCCEDP) offers **free or low-cost** mammograms and education about breast cancer.

Find out if you qualify at: [www.cdc.gov/cancer/nbccedp/](http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/nbccedp/).

Most health insurance companies and Medicare/Medicaid plans cover the cost of screening mammograms. Check your insurance coverage guidelines for more details.



**Content:** Provided by Laura O'Reilly, R.N. AVP Health & Wellness, Easter Seals New Jersey  
**Sources:** Members of Developmental Disabilities Nurses Association; National Council on Aging; [www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/11168779](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/11168779); [www.cdc.gov/cancer/breast/basic\\_info/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/breast/basic_info/index.htm); [www.cdc.gov/Features/BreastCancerDisabilities/](http://www.cdc.gov/Features/BreastCancerDisabilities/)  
**Cited:** Hsieh, K., Heller, T. and Miller, A. B. (2001), Risk factors for injuries and falls among adults with developmental disabilities. *Journal of Intellectual Disability Research*, 45: 76-82.



See how Easter Seals New Jersey is taking steps to address chronic health issues for people with disabilities at [eastersealsnj.org/health](http://eastersealsnj.org/health)

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 Helping people and families with disabilities to live, learn, work and play in their communities since 1948!