

Dutchess County Office for the Aging's

AGING NEWS

For the week of July 13th

Is It Time To Clean Up Our Rooms?

When it's an older adult's safety and independence on the line, the answer is a resounding "yes."

There are many aspects of aging that are inevitable, but being injured in a fall in one's own home is largely preventable.

What You're Used To Can Still Hurt You

Fall vulnerability doesn't announce itself ahead of time, but can creep up on us through vision loss, cognitive decline, medication side effects, and

mobility issues. That's how a throw rug can become less a charming home accessory, and more of a fall hazard, should it slide when stepped on. Any such rugs in your home should either be removed, or fastened securely to the floor.

That's just one recommendation of many. For the purposes of this article, we'll start with solutions that are either low cost or free, with minimal renovations required:

- Make sure nothing is blocking your walking paths (furniture, floor lamps, pet bowls, etc.);
- Keep objects off the floor when possible;
- Keep cords and wires next to walls, not under rugs or running across rooms; and
- Clean up clutter.

Falls at home most commonly happen in the bathroom, bedroom, and kitchen. Let's focus on those rooms next, starting with the kitchen:

- Wear skid-free footwear;
- Keep things you use most often on lower shelves, about waist high;
- If you must use a step stool, get one with a bar to hold on to, and **never use a chair as a step stool**;
- Clean up spills right away, especially if oily or greasy; and
- Cut, shred, or grate cooking ingredients while seated, if necessary.

In the bathroom:

- Use a removable shower chair or bench to avoid overexertion and slips while washing;
- Consider a transfer bench that allows you to sit outside the tub, slide safely in, and avoid stepping over a high tub wall; and

- Install a raised toilet seat or use a toilet safety frame to make sitting and standing less strenuous.

In the bedroom:

- Place lamps close to each side of your bed, within easy reach;
- Nightstands should be able to support your weight, if needed, for help with balance;
- Keep shoes and clutter off the floor;
- If you use a walking aid, save a spot near the bed for it; and
- Closet contents should be easy to reach.

The Great Grab-Bar Debate

Many older adults object to the installation of grab bars in their homes. "They look institutional" is one key complaint. We may be aging, but we might not want to be continually reminded of it. Older adults increasingly want safety

features to mesh well with other fixtures, and the home safety market is slowly evolving to meet the demand.

No matter the style, correct grab-bar installation remains key. This is a key concern for renters, who often need to involve their landlord in the installation process. Regardless of one's housing arrangements, one thing holds true: don't bother with suction cup grab bars. Suction cup grab bars are often marketed as temporary or portable solutions, but they are notoriously unreliable and can detach suddenly, leading to serious injuries.

Other Grab Bar Mistakes

A grab bar must be able to support a person's full weight, not just a light pull. Mounting into drywall alone is one of the most dangerous mistakes, because the bar can rip out of the wall with very little force. Other installation errors include not matching placement to a person's real-world mobility, such as placing a grab bar too high, too low, or too far from where it's needed.

Proper grab bar installation requires:

- Anchoring into studs whenever possible;
- Using load-rated anchors when studs are not in ideal locations; and
- Confirming a secure connection before finishing.

OFA At Rhinebeck Farmers Market, Sunday 7/12

OFA Nutrition Services Coordinator Nimesh Bhargava will be at the Rhinebeck Farmers Market (61 E. Market St.) from 10am to 2pm on Sunday, July 12th, distributing \$25 New York State Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program coupon booklets, while supplies last, to qualifying Dutchess County older adults. The coupons provide older New Yorkers with access to free, locally sourced produce at participating markets throughout the state.

See www.dutchessny.gov/ofanutrition for more information, including a list of participating markets in Dutchess.

Wappinger OFA Picnic At Capacity

The OFA Summer Picnic scheduled for July 22nd for older residents of the Town of Wappinger and Village of Wappingers Falls has reached maximum capacity. For residents of other communities that haven't yet experienced this year's picnics, seats remain available. All picnics are scheduled for Wednesdays:

July 15, Stissing Mountain High School in Pine Plains – for Towns of North East, Pine Plains, Stanford and Washington, plus any Town of Milan residents who were unable to attend the June 10th picnic and did not receive reminder cards

July 29 – Town of Pleasant Valley (at West Road School)

August 12 – City of Poughkeepsie (at Stitzel Field)

August 19 – Towns of Beekman and LaGrange (at Freedom Park)

August 26 – Town of East Fishkill (at Hopewell Rec Park)

The full schedule, including Google Map links and pictures from past picnics, is at www.dutchessny.gov/ofapicnics. Many thanks to the Pines at

Poughkeepsie, Central Hudson, Westchester Medical Center Health Network, and AccentCare for their support of this year's program.

OFA Mobile Office Hours for Summer

Here's the summertime list of OFA Ambassador Mary Reedy's mobile office hours...thus far.

To book your half-hour time slot to get your aging services questions answered, call OFA during business hours at 845-486-2555:

(NEW) Tuesday, July 21st, noon-1:30pm – Clinton Library/Town Hall, 1215 Centre Rd., Rhinebeck

Thursday, July 23rd, 10am-noon – Tri-Town Friendship Center, 1576 Main St. (US 44), Pleasant Valley (at the Presbyterian Church)

Tuesday, July 28th, 1-3pm – Millbrook Library, 3 Friendship Ln.

Thursday, August 27th, noon-3pm – Amenia Library, 3309 NY 343

Your local civic organizations or governments can arrange Mobile Office Hours for your home community by contacting OFA at 845-486-2555 during business hours or emailing ofa@dutchessny.gov.

Other news:

A happy 103rd birthday to [Irene Clayton of Pine Plains](#)...

...and a farewell [to Ruth Hogan of Poughquag](#), who passed away just shy of turning 102. Ruth was honored by OFA in 2019 for her volunteer service in Dutchess County, which included co-founding the Beekman Rescue Squad as well as serving as CPR and childbirth instructor at her local firehouse as well as at Dutchess Community College and the Dutchess County Fire Training Center.

[Scams cost their American victims an estimated \\$68 billion in 2025](#) – and that's almost certainly a lowball figure since the most successful scams go undetected and unreported.

The last American with polio who required an [iron lung](#) passed away recently in Oklahoma, at age 78. She contracted polio before a vaccine was widely available.

If you live or walk near the Wappinger Creek anywhere in Dutchess County, you may see some signs that the water is in healthy shape, although the critters that indicate good health may look startling to those who [haven't seen a hellgrammite before](#).

This week's birthdays:

7/11: Singer/songwriter [Suzanne Vega](#) (67)

7/12: Actress [Cheryl Ladd](#) (75)

7/13: Game show announcer [Johnny Gilbert](#) (98)

7/14: Actress/comedian [Jane Lynch](#) (66)

7/15: Singer/songwriter [Linda Ronstadt](#) (80)

7/16: Drummer/songwriter [Stewart Copeland](#) (The Police) (74)

7/17: NHL Hall of Famer [Bryan Trottier](#) (69)

How about a Bad Joke in honor of heat and humidity?

What do you call a bee that's having a bad hair day?

A frisbee!