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HEALTHY AGING IN PINELLAS

September brings observances that spotlight senior health

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Keeping older residents safe and healthy is the focus of several observances in September, making it a good time to take steps to protect older loved ones.

The Florida Department of Health in Pinellas County (DOH-Pinellas) is observing Healthy Aging Month, National Prostate Cancer Awareness Month and World Alzheimer's Month in September.

Adding to the month's focus on issues affecting older residents is Falls Prevention

Day on Sept. 22 and World Heart Day on Sept. 29.

"Older Americans can have a higher quality of life by focusing on steps that improve or prevent chronic diseases such as diabetes and heart disease," said DOH-Pinellas Director Dr. Ulyee Choe. "Maintaining a healthy weight and practicing good habits such as nutritious diet, physical fitness and regular check-ups are especially important as we age."

The Area Agency on Aging of Pasco-Pinellas, Inc. is a great place to start for information about services for older area residents—from wellness tips and programs to resources for caregivers of older adults. Go to <https://agingcarefl.org/stay-healthy-active/> or call (800) 963-5337 for information.

Unintentional falls are the leading cause of fatal and non-fatal injuries among Florida residents ages 65 years and older. DOH recommends these steps to help older adults avoid falls:

- Exercising regularly (especially leg strengthening and improving balance)
- Having an eye doctor check their vision at least once a year
- Making their home environment safer
- Reviewing their medicines with a doctor or pharmacist

Gentle exercises such as walking and Tai Chi can provide mental and physical benefits. For more information on preventing falls, go to <http://www.floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/prevention/older-adult-falls-prevention/index.html>.

For resources on Alzheimer's Disease and information for caregivers, go <https://www.alz.org/>.

For information about DOH-Pinellas, go to www.PinellasHealth.com or call (727) 824-6900. Follow us on Twitter, Facebook and Nextdoor for the latest agency updates.

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