

Matter of Balance Class Addresses Concerns about Falling

By Janet Hackert, Nutrition Specialist

As we grow older, the fear of falling increases and can actually limit our activity levels due to fear. The University of Missouri Extension in cooperation with the Frank L. Mitchell Trauma Center, and Boston University has developed a curriculum that addresses this serious concern that many people have. The eight week *Matter of Balance* class will be offered on Tuesdays and Thursdays, starting September 27th at Princeton Manor, 2610 Princeton Road in Trenton, from 1:30-3:30 p.m. The fee for the course is \$25, but scholarships may be available for qualified participants.

The *Matter of Balance* program is designed to help reduce the fear of falling and increase the activity levels of older adults who have concerns about balance issues. Participants will learn:

- 1) to view falls and fear of falling as controllable,
- 2) to control the fear of falling by setting realistic goals for increasing their activity levels,
- 3) how to change their environment to reduce fall risk factors, and
- 4) various exercises designed to increase strength and balance.

The fear of falling can truly interfere with everyday life by causing older adults to restrict what were normally every day activities associated with a healthy lifestyle. It can cause them to stop getting out to visit friends or taking walks. It can also take away their independence, causing them to become isolated and depressed. Reduced physical activity can cause decreased muscle strength and weaken bones. This actually increases the risk of falling.

This class teaches participants ways to challenge their concerns and replace them with more constructive, confidence-building ideas. By learning what they need to do to improve their strength and stay independent, they may also have more energy, improve their balance, prevent or delay the onset of certain diseases, improve their mood and reduce depression. The *Matter of Balance* class helps participants find the right steps that will work for them.

For more information about the class being offered in Trenton in September-October, please contact Janet Hackert (660-425-6434) or Connie Neal (660-359-4040, x246). Class size is limited, so please be sure to pre-register to secure a spot. If you need special accommodations to participate, please inform us when you pre-register.

(Written September 9, 2011)