



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Idaho Public Health Districts

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June 2015

## Celebrating 10 Years of Preventing Falls in Idaho

Every day in America, an older adult will fall. Some will die as a result of their fall, others will escape with minor injuries, and others will end up in an emergency room. In Idaho, from 2010 to 2013, 469 individuals age 65 and older died from fall related injuries. Falls can significantly reduce an older adult's independence and severely affect their quality of life.

Local public health districts envision older adults living safe, healthy, and independent lives. While falls pose a significant risk to the older adult population, there are preventive measures that can be taken that can reduce falls and significantly improve an older adult's ability to remain self-sufficient, healthy, and independent in their own homes.

One such preventative measure is increased levels of physical activity. In 2005, the Fit and Fall Proof™ (FFP) Program was implemented throughout the state. FFP is a no cost exercise-based fall prevention program for older adults that focus on low-to-moderate intensity functional exercises designed to reduce the risk of falls and improve mobility, balance, flexibility, and strength. The program is designed for individuals to exercise while they are standing independently or holding onto or sitting in a chair. Norm, 90, from Idaho Falls stated, "I watched my wife at her FFP class for a long time and always thought it wouldn't do me any good. One day, she convinced me to give it a try. Boy was I surprised. I have never felt healthier. My only regret is that I waited so long to start because I could have had these benefits much earlier."

FFP classes are taught throughout Idaho communities by local volunteer leaders that are trained by public health employees. Classes are held in places such as senior centers, community centers, churches, libraries, and hospitals. There are currently more than 75 class sites statewide, offering older adults the opportunity to participate in classes multiple times per week and throughout the year. For the past 10 years, FFP classes have helped thousands of Idaho adults stay fit and prevent falls.



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Fit and Fall Proof™ classes also offer seniors an opportunity to expand their social network. These classes often become more than just an exercise class. Participants become friends and plan social activities in addition to attending classes. Some participants have shared they began the classes by forcing themselves to attend but became so engaged, they never wanted to miss a class.

Jean, from Troy, summed it up nicely by stating, "This class has kept me out of a wheelchair. I have osteoarthritis and fibromyalgia and I am hoping to avoid surgery and pain meds. I just take over-the-counter pain meds. The class has helped my attitude because the class is so much fun. I don't miss unless it is to go fishing."

### HEALTHY PEOPLE IN HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

PANHANDLE HEALTH DISTRICT (1)	PUBLIC HEALTH - IDAHO NORTH CENTRAL DISTRICT (2)	SOUTHWEST DISTRICT HEALTH (3)	CENTRAL DISTRICT HEALTH (4)	SOUTH CENTRAL PUBLIC HEALTH DISTRICT (5)	SOUTHEASTERN IDAHO PUBLIC HEALTH (6)	EASTERN IDAHO PUBLIC HEALTH (7)
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