

7 Simple Tips to Prevent Falls

Falls are the leading cause of injury admissions to Hospital, and half of all falls occur at home. Over a third of seniors experience a fall every year, while some may have more than 1 fall. Falls have an impact on our physical, emotional & functional well-being.

Consider these 7 tips to reduce your risk of a fall:

1. **Talk to your doctor or pharmacist**

Make a list of the prescriptions, over-the-counter medications, and supplements you are taking. Your doctor or pharmacist can check for side effects and drug interactions that may increase your risk of falling.

Have your hearing and vision checked regularly.

Tell your doctor if you have fallen before including when, where and how you fell.

2. **Keep moving**

Stay physically active every day and keep hydrated. Walking is a great option.

Maintain your overall strength, endurance and balance with simple exercises.

Many seniors exercise programs are available in the community.

Make sure to talk to you doctor before starting any new exercise program.

3. **Wear sensible shoes**

Wear properly fitting, sturdy shoes with non-skid soles.

High heels, floppy slippers and socks can make you slip, stumble and fall.

4. **Watch your step**

- Scan the ground ahead of you for hazards.
- Avoid reading or texting on your cell phone while walking.
- Hold onto railings when descending stairs.

5. **Remove home hazards**

Take a look around your home to identify and eliminate fall hazards.

- Remove clutter, electrical wires and phone cords from your path of walking.
- Move coffee tables, magazine racks and plant stands from high-traffic areas.
- Remove or secure area rugs with double-faced tape, tacks or a slip-resistant backing.
- Store frequently used items (clothing, dishes, food, toiletries) within easy reach.
- Immediately clean spilled liquids or food.
- Use nonslip mats in your bathtub or shower.
- Properly install railings on stairs and grab bars in the washroom.

6. Light up your life

Keep your home brightly lit to avoid tripping on objects.

- Place night lights in your bedroom, bathroom and hallways.
- Have a bedside lamp within easy reach.
- Turn on the lights before going up or down stairs.
- Store flashlights in easy-to-find places in case of power outages.

7. Use assistive devices

Don't be embarrassed to use aids for daily living—they can keep you safe and active.

- Wear your glasses and hearing aids.
- Purchase a reacher device, long handled shoe horn and bathing sponge.
- Try a bath seat or bench, and a raised toilet seat.
- Consider obtaining a walker or cane that has been selected to match your needs (height, weight, balance, location for use).

November is Falls Prevention Month across Canada. You can learn more on how to protect yourself from falling or someone you love at: fallpreventionmonth.ca.

Additional falls prevention information resources:

The Public Health Agency of Canada

phac-aspc.gc.ca/seniors-aines

The Canadian Mortgage & Housing Corporation

cmhc-schl.gc.ca

The Centre for Disease Control (U.S.)

cdc.gov/HomeandRecreationalSafety/Falls

Services for Seniors:

NYGH Geriatric Services

nygh.on.ca/seniorcare

Specialized Geriatric Services

sgsonline.ca

Regional Geriatric Program

rgp.toronto.ca

Community Care Access Centre

central.ccc-ont.ca