



# Staying on Your Feet

## Taking Steps to Prevent Falls

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*Taking Steps to Prevent Falls*

# Why falls prevention?

- **1 out of 3** Canadians over the age of **65** and **1 out of 2** Canadians over the age of **80** will fall at least once a year
- older adults who fall once are more than **twice** as likely to fall again
- women are **3X** more likely than men to be hospitalized for a fall

**Most falls can be prevented and are NOT a normal part of aging**

# Staying On Your Feet



# About falls

- falls are **not** a normal part of aging
- many falls are preventable
- tell someone about a slip, trip or fall
- identify your risk factors and make a plan

**Falls are the leading cause of injury death and hospitalization for older adults in Manitoba**

# Definition of a fall

**...Unintentionally coming to rest on a lower level with or without injury...**



# What causes a fall?



# Risk factors

**a loss of  
balance**

**low vitamin D**

**side effects of  
medicine**

**unsafe  
footwear**

**impaired  
mobility or  
vision**

**environmental  
hazards**

Falls usually happen because of a combination of risk factors, such as:

# Did you have a fall in the last year?

- if you had a fall it increases your chances of falling again
- it is important to take action to prevent falls

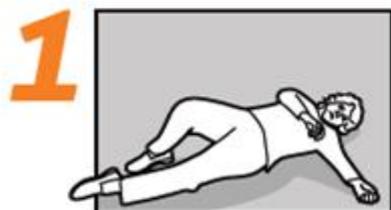
## You can...

- ✓ complete the Staying on Your Feet checklist
- ✓ make an action plan to deal with your risk factors



# How to get up from the floor by yourself after a fall

- Calm down.
- Check your body.
- If you are injured, call for help. Stay warm.
- If you are not injured, look for a sturdy piece of furniture.



Roll onto your side.



Crawl over to a chair or sturdy furniture.



From a kneeling position, put your arms up onto the seat of the chair.



Bring one knee forward. Place that foot on the floor.



Push up with your arms and legs. Pivot your bottom around.



Sit down. Rest before trying to move.

**Tell your doctor or healthcare provider if you have had a fall.**

Provided by Alberta Health Services, based on "Don't fall for it. Falls can be prevented!" State Government of Australia. 2004. Copyright Commonwealth of Australia. Reproduced by permission. Translation provided by the Multicultural Health Brokers Cooperative.



# A checklist to help you prevent falls

Use the checklist to identify the things that put you at risk of falling

## A Checklist to Help You Prevent Falls



Anyone can be injured due to a fall. However, if you are 65 years or over, a fall can result in serious injuries that affect your mobility, independence and lifestyle.

Here are some other facts that you should know about falling:

- One in three Canadians age 65 years and over fall at least once per year.
- Falling is not a normal part of aging.
- Most falls can be prevented.

The following checklist can help you to determine the things that put you at risk of falling. Please read and complete the section below to help you stay on your feet and prevent falls:

**Check If Yes**

Do you spend less than 30 minutes per day being physically active?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have difficulty keeping your balance, or walking on your own or getting up from a chair?	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Regular physical activity can make you stronger and improve your balance and coordination. Make a plan to be active every day doing activities you like to do and are able to do safely.</i>	
Do you wear shoes with high heels or slippery soles, or do your shoes fit poorly?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you wear slippers or stocking feet when you are at home?	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Proper footwear is a key to preventing falls. Wear shoes that fit well and provide good support. At home, wear shoes with a non-slip sole, not socks or slippers.</i>	
Are you taking three or more medications a day?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are you taking sleeping pills, anti-depressants, anti-hypertensives, painkillers or other medications that make you drowsy or light headed?	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Have your medications reviewed by your doctor, pharmacist or nurse once per year, or whenever new medications are started. This will reduce side effects and interactions that can make you more likely to fall. This includes over-the-counter drugs and herbal supplements.</i>	
Has it been more than 12 months since your eyes were tested or your glasses checked?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have trouble seeing well enough to move safely at home or when you are out?	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Your vision may have changed without you noticing. Have your eyes checked regularly by your eye doctor, at least every second year. If you have trouble seeing, get the help you need to move around safely.</i>	

# Improve my balance and stay active

- exercise for strength and balance



# Improve my balance and stay active

## You can...

- ✓ see a physiotherapist to assess your balance and prescribe exercises
- ✓ join an exercise class that focuses on balance exercises (Tai Chi)
- ✓ do balance and strength exercises 15 minutes each day using the SOYF balance exercise handout
- ✓ visit [www.preventfalls.ca](http://www.preventfalls.ca) for a list of exercise classes



# Improve my balance and stay active

**You can stay strong and healthy by...**

- ✓ doing Tai Chi
- ✓ walking
- ✓ swimming
- ✓ cycling
- ✓ exercising in a group

**Enjoy being active 30 minutes or more a day!**



# Home balance and strength exercises



# Manage my medications

## Medications taken by older adults...

- include prescription drugs, over-the-counter medications and herbal or homeopathic remedies
- increase your chance of falling if you take 3 or more medications
- may cause dizziness. Tell your doctor if you often feel dizzy or light headed



# Manage my medications

## You can...

- ✓ have your medications reviewed by your doctor, pharmacist or nurse
- ✓ ask your doctor if your medications put you at risk for falling
- ✓ talk to your health care provider if you feel dizzy
- ✓ limit the use of alcohol as it may interact with your medications



# Vitamin D & eating healthy

## Vitamin D...

- can prevent a fall by keeping muscles strong
- can keep bones strong by helping them absorb calcium
- is found in sunshine and some foods BUT it is difficult to get enough vitamin D from these sources



# Vitamin D & eating healthy

## You can...

- ✓ take a vitamin D supplement of 1000 IU every day
- ✓ eat foods that are high in vitamin D like salmon, tuna and eggs and fortified milk, rice and soy drinks
- ✓ drink 6-8 glasses of water every day
- ✓ eat a variety of nutritious foods



# Foot care and safe footwear

## Footwear should...

- fit properly
- have low wide heels
- non-slip soles
- lace-up or velcro
- worn inside and outside your home



## Features of a supportive shoe



# Manage your health conditions

## Health conditions such as:

- arthritis
- diabetes
- problems with eyesight
- bladder control
- and others



# Managing your health conditions

## You can...

- ✓ learn as much as you can about your condition
- ✓ take care of yourself by eating well, exercising, not smoking and limiting alcohol
- ✓ have regular checkups with your doctor



# Take care of my eyesight

## You can...

- ✓ have your eyes checked every two years by ophthalmologist or optometrist
- ✓ have your glasses and eyewear checked annually by your optician
- ✓ clean and fix your glasses
- ✓ take time to adjust to new lenses and sudden changes of light



# Safety equipment

**Safety equipment can help prevent a fall or protect you if you fall**

- ✓ cane
- ✓ walker
- ✓ grabber/reacher
- ✓ medical alarm system
- ✓ hip protectors
- ✓ grab bars, raised toilet seats and hand held showers
- ✓ night lights



# Identify, Remove and Report Hazards

## You can...

- ✓ remove loose mats and rugs
- ✓ improve lighting
- ✓ remove clutter and clean up spills
- ✓ use hand rails on stairs
- ✓ use non-slip strips to mark step edges
- ✓ use the Home Safety Checklist to identify the fall risk in your home



# Current issues

## Recall Notice

**February 24, 2015: Philips Lifeline recalls the non-breakaway neck cord version of Lifeline Personal Help Button pendants**

### Hazard Identified

Cords that do not have the breakaway design may pose a strangulation risk if the cord becomes caught or entangled on a wheelchair, walker or other protruding objects



# Now What?

- ✓ identify what is currently putting you at risk of falling
- ✓ use your action plan to help take action to prevent a fall
- ✓ share the completed checklist and action plan with your partner, family member, friend or health care provider involved in helping you prevent a fall



**Prevent falls and stay active and independent**



Take action **TODAY**  
to prevent falls

# Contact Information



# Publications

While there are many publications and articles in this area, we have only included large scale studies and meta-analyses, which provide the most high quality information to date, and reports about Winnipeg, Manitoba and Canada falls statistics.

- Gillespie LD, Robertson MC, Gillespie WJ, Lamb SE, Gates S, Cumming RG, et al. **Interventions for preventing falls in older people living in the community.** *Cochrane Database Syst Rev* 2012(9):CD007146.
- Public Health Agency of Canada – Division of Aging and Seniors. **Second report on seniors' falls in Canada.** Ottawa, ON: Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 2014.
- Scott V, Wagar L, Elliott S. Falls & Related Injuries among **Older Canadians: Fall-related Hospitalizations & Intervention Initiatives.** Prepared on behalf of the Public Health Agency of Canada, Division of Aging and Seniors. Victoria BC: Victoria Scott Consulting, 2010.
- Sherrington C, Tiedemann A, Fairhall N, Close JC, Lord SR. **Exercise to prevent falls in older adults: an updated meta-analysis and best practice recommendations.** *N S W Public Health Bull* 2011;22(3-4):78-83.
- Sherrington C, Whitney JC, Lord SR, Herbert RD, Cummings RG, Close JCT. **Effective Exercise for the Prevention of Falls: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis.** *The American Geriatrics Society* 2008;56(12):2234-2243.