

Changing Behaviours to Prevent Falls



Falls are a real concern for older adults. One out of three people over the age of 65 fall each year. The good news is that most falls are preventable. Seniors can lower their risks one by one by changing risky behaviour, taking steps to proactively manage their health, and safety proofing their homes. Below are the six most common risk factors and some key tips for avoiding falls:

Balance problems: Staying active is important. Regular, moderate physical activity increases muscle strength and balance. A healthcare provider can prescribe an exercise program that's right for you or your loved one.

Mobility issues: Wear non-slip, low heeled shoes or slippers that fit snugly. Rubber soles with traction are a good choice.

Multiple medications: A list of all medications (prescriptions, over the counter, herbal, supplements etc) should be kept in an easy to find place and brought to every healthcare visit. Always check with a healthcare provider or pharmacist about medication directions and side effects.

Low blood pressure: If you or a loved one feels dizzy or lightheaded, sit down or stay seated until it clears. Stand up slowly to avoid unsteadiness.

Sensory deficits: Ask for a hearing and eyesight test. Be sure to tell your doctor if you or your loved one has dizziness or balance problems.

Home hazards: Eliminate obvious hazards in the home. Add safety modifications in the bedroom, bathroom and kitchen (i.e. nightlights, grab bars, non-slip mats or strips in the tub/shower). Consult an occupational or physical therapist to assure correct positioning of any safety equipment.

Next steps:

In addition to following the tips above:

1. Understand your risk: Talk to your primary care provider about having a fall -risk evaluation.
2. Ask yourself: If I were to fall tonight, how would I get help if I couldn't reach the phone? Subscribing to a medical alert service is a great way to ensure if you do fall, you can access help 24/7 at the push of a button. Some services also offer automatic fall detection.

Remember, it's never too early to take the right steps to live more safely. Protecting yourself before a fall can provide you with greater peace of mind and confidence to live independently and confidently.

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Interior Health Lifeline Program

A not-for-profit, hospital based, community supported program, providing home emergency response monitoring services to seniors, the medically at risk, and physically challenged individuals.
Lifeline - a caring connection which promotes safety and independence.

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