

A Checklist to Help You Prevent Falls



While anyone can have a fall, if you are 65 years of age or older you are at greater risk of falling. A fall can result in serious injuries that affect your mobility, independence and lifestyle.

- 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 identify the things that put you at risk of falling.

Answer the questions below to help you stay on your feet and prevent falls.

Check if Yes

Have you had a fall in the last year?

If you have previously fallen, your chance of falling again is higher. This makes it especially important that you take action to prevent falls. Completing this checklist is a good start.

Do you have trouble with your balance, are you unsteady on your feet or do you have difficulty getting up from sitting?

Do balance and strength exercises 15 minutes each day, such as Tai Chi, or a specific balance exercise program. Visit www.preventfalls.ca for a series of home balance exercises or to find a balance exercise program in your community.

Do you spend less than 30 minutes each day being physically active?

Many falls are the result of weak muscles and/or poor balance. Stay strong and healthy by walking, swimming, cycling, exercising in a group or doing other activities that you enjoy.

Do you take three or more medications a day?

Do you take medications for sleeping, blood pressure, mental health, or pain, or any medications that make you drowsy or light headed?

Some side effects and combinations of medications can increase your risk of a fall. Have your medications, over-the-counter drugs and herbal supplements reviewed by your doctor, pharmacist or nurse once per year and whenever new medications are started.

Do you take less than 1000 IU of vitamin D each day?

Do you eat less than three nutritious meals every day?

For good health, take a 1000 IU vitamin D supplement each day and eat nutritious foods from all four food groups. Limit your alcohol intake.

Do your shoes have high heels, slippery soles or fit poorly?

Do you wear slippers or socks or stockings without shoes?

Proper footwear is a key to preventing falls. Wear shoes that fit well and provide good support outdoors and indoors. Do not wear just socks or slippers in your home.

Have you had a stroke? Do you have arthritis, diabetes, Parkinson's Disease, or problems with your heart, blood pressure or bladder?

Many health conditions can increase your risk of falling. If your health changes, see your doctor as soon as possible.

Has it been more than two years since your eyes were tested or one year since your glasses were checked?

Have your eyes checked every two years by your eye doctor and have your eyewear checked for fit each year. Your vision may have changed without you noticing.

Do you do activities that put you at risk of falling such as climbing a ladder?

Are there hazards in your home that could cause you to fall such as scatter rugs, clutter on the floor or stairs, or poor lighting?

Always give your full attention to what you are doing and ask for help with activities that could put you at risk of a fall. Assess your home with the **Staying On Your Feet Home Safety Checklist** on page 25 or for more detailed information, visit www.preventfalls.ca. A safe home can help you maintain an independent lifestyle.

If you answered "yes" to one or more of these questions you have identified your personal risk factors for falling.

To find out how you can reduce your risk and stay on your feet, read the sections in this book that apply to your risk factors. Share this checklist with your family, close friends, or care providers so they can help support your efforts to prevent falls.

To learn more, visit www.PreventFalls.ca

Most falls are preventable!

Take action TODAY to prevent falls and maintain your mobility and independence.