

Learning how to prevent falls and related injuries is part of maintaining a healthy and active lifestyle. Although everyone is at risk, seniors are especially at risk of falling. Serious falls can lead to hip fractures, broken bones, and head injuries. There are many things you can do to prevent falls.

COMMON REASONS SENIORS FALL

- Risk factors can be due to medical conditions such as poor vision, glaucoma, cataracts, dizziness, and arthritis.
- Other risk factors can be due to lifestyle habits which can be managed to reduce the risk of falls. Examples of risks include side effects of medications (such as drowsiness), poor diet and sleep, stiff joints, and muscle weakness. Consult with your doctor to reduce these lifestyle risks.

Visit a doctor if you are experiencing pain or weakness. It could be a sign of an undiagnosed illness or injury

8 EASY WAYS TO PREVENT FALLING:

1. Take all your prescribed medications regularly. If your medications are making you feel unwell, talk to your doctor.
2. Get an eye exam by an eye doctor every two years.
3. Drink water. Dehydration can lead to dizziness and falls.
4. Keep physically active to prevent stiff joints. Consult a physiotherapist about an exercise plan. Check with your doctor before starting an exercise regime.
5. Get enough sleep at night so you can remain alert during the day.
6. Use night lights, especially for the path from the bedroom to the bathroom.
7. Keep your environment clean and clutter free. Prevent falls in the bathroom by ensuring your floors are kept dry and by installing mats in the shower stall.
8. Limit your alcohol intake and DO NOT mix alcohol with medications.

RESOURCES

- Vancouver Coastal Health Fall Prevention
<http://www.vch.ca/public-health/health-topics-a-z/topics/fall-prevention>
- Finding Balance
<http://findingbalancebc.ca/home/general-fall-prevention/>
- HealthLink BC
<https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/healthlinkbc-files/prevent-senior-falls>



HOW CAN OCCUPATIONAL AND PHYSICAL THERAPISTS HELP ME?

Occupational and Physical therapists (Physiotherapists) are health care providers who help to improve mobility, prevent injury, and improve daily functioning after illness or injury. Although these health care professionals have different roles, both are rehabilitation experts who help with fall prevention.

Physiotherapists can ...

Teach you how to use appropriate and customized equipment to aid in safe walking

Provide assessments and help you strengthen weak muscle groups by assigning special exercises

Prescribe or recommend an appropriate walking aid. Do NOT use someone else's equipment.

Assess your centre of balance and suggest ways to improve balance

Occupational Therapists can...

Suggest household changes to ensure patient safety

Provide equipment like wheelchairs to help transport patients to medical appointments

Help install safety devices such as handles in the washroom, professional non-slip chairs, anti-slip mats

Perform home assessments and safety evaluations for patients.



DID YOU KNOW?

A doctor can refer you to an occupational therapist. You can access a physical therapist by self-referral

In partnership with The Ministry of Health's Patients as Partners Initiative



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