

GOALS FOR TODAY

- To learn about falls
- To identify your risk factors for falling.
- To learn about how to create a personal plan for preventing falls.



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HOW COMMON ARE FALLS?

- Annually 30% of seniors fall in their homes



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What are the effects of falls?

- Fear of falling
- Loss of independence
- Injury (fractures of the hip, upper arm, forearm, ankle, ribs, vertebral column, and pelvis)
- Death



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Fear of Falling

- 25% of falls result in the person restricting their usual activity
 - **The fear of falling can cause:**
 - Decreased mobility
 - Depression
 - Decreased independence
 - Further increased risk of falling



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Loss of Independence

- 40% of admissions to nursing homes are related to falls
- The number of days of activity lost from home injuries is higher for seniors



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Injury

- An estimated 5-10% of falls result in injury
- Of those who fall, 20-30% suffer moderate to severe injuries
- 84% of injury related hospital admissions are due to falls



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Death

- Falls are the 6th leading cause of death in Canada
- Falls are the leading cause of accidental death for seniors

How to determine your RISK

DO YOU...

- feel dizzy?
- take 3 or more medications?
- drink alcohol frequently?
- have foot problems?
- have weak muscles or stiff joints?
- have to rush to the bathroom?

DO YOU... (Continued)

- have vision or hearing difficulties?
- have difficulty sleeping?
- have shortness of breath?
- regularly check for safety hazards in your home?
- use special equipment or have difficulties with day to day activities?



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What you can do to reduce your risk

- Identify the areas of risk for you.
- Identify what may be causing this risk factor.
- Determine what you can do.
- Act on reducing your risk factors.



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Do you ever feel dizzy?

- What Can Cause Dizziness?
 - Standing up to quickly
 - Low /high blood pressure
 - Medication side effects
 - Inner ear problems



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dizziness continued

What you can do

- Sit on the side of the bed for a few minutes before you stand up
- Have your blood pressure checked regularly
- Have your ears checked
- Consult your doctor or nurse



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Do you take three or more medications?

- What can cause problems
 - Taking non-prescription medications, herbal remedies or alcohol with prescriptions
 - Using someone else's medications
 - Your doctor may not know what medications you are taking or side effects you have experienced



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(Medications continued)

What you can do

- Never borrow medication from others
- Keep a list of your medications in your wallet
- Ask your pharmacist about non-prescription medications
- Throw away outdated medications
- Use the same pharmacy
- Avoid alcohol
- Review your medications with your doctor each time you add or drop a medication

Do you drink alcohol frequently?

- What can cause over-use of Alcohol?
 - Using alcohol to aid sleep
 - Using alcohol to relieve pain
 - Loneliness, depression, sadness, grief or loss
 - Boredom
 - Stressful situations



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(Alcohol continued)

What you can do

- Record how much and why you use alcohol
- Learn about how your body responds to alcohol with age
- Find out whether your feelings are common so you can find healthy ways to deal with them. Sharing your feelings with someone you trust may help.



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Do you have foot problems?

- What can cause foot problems?
 - Poorly fitting shoes or shoes with high narrow heels, slippery soles, or no support
 - Swollen Feet
 - Untreated foot problems
 - Poor posture
 - Loss of feeling in your feet as a result of some diseases



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(foot problems continued)

What you can do

- Wear proper fitting supportive shoes with broad heels
- Talk with a doctor or nurse about your foot problems
- Buy slippers that fit properly and are enclosed around the heels
- Keep your feet up if they are swollen
- Wear loose socks or stockings



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Do you have weak muscles or stiff joints?

- What can cause this?
 - Lack of physical activity, including not walking
 - Unresolved injury, pain or discomfort
 - Conditions affecting the muscles and joints
 - Tight muscles
 - Energetic physical exercise



(weak muscles or stiff joints continued)

What you can do

- Join an exercise program
- Plan a regular activity and gradually increase it
- Talk to your doctor about your discomfort.



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Do you have to rush to the bathroom?

- **What can cause this?**
 - Weakness of muscles controlling flow
 - Changes in your eating or drinking habits
 - Side effects of medications
 - Infections
 - Prostrate problems
 - Constipation can contribute to bladder problems



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(bathroom continued)

What you can do

- Go to the bathroom before going to bed
- Avoid beverages containing caffeine
- Eat a high fiber diet, plenty of fluid and exercise
- For exercises to strengthen muscles that control urine flow, see your doctor
- See your doctor about changes in bladder and/or bowel control

Do you have vision difficulties?

- **What can cause vision difficulties?**
 - Dirty or scratched glasses
 - Eyesight prescription has changed
 - Low light causing eye strain
 - Diseases of the eye



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(vision continued)

What you can do

- Clean your glasses regularly
- Have your vision checked
- Wear sunglasses in the sun or special glasses to cut down on glare
- Use good lighting



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Do you have hearing difficulties?

What can cause these difficulties?

- Wax build up in ear
- Dirty hearing aids or old batteries
- Inner ear problems



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(Hearing continued)

What you can do

- Make sure your ears are clear of too much wax
- Clean your hearing aid and check batteries often
- In a public place choose to sit in the corner to reduce noise



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Do you experience difficulty sleeping?

- What can cause this?
 - Lack of physical activity
 - Poor sleeping environment
 - Lack of sunlight
 - Napping in late afternoon or early evening
 - Stress, sadness, grief, depression or loss
 - Medication or alcohol use
 - Aches or pains



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(Sleeping continued)

What you can do

- Avoid food and drinks with caffeine after 4pm
 - Keep bedroom cool and quiet
 - Learn relaxation techniques
 - Increase exercise during day
 - Limit alcohol use
 - Check with your healthcare professional for other tips

Do you experience shortness of breath?

What can cause this?

- Smoking
- Lack of physical activity
- Obesity
- Pollution
- Lung, respiratory infections or chronic diseases
- Allergies/asthma
- Heart Problems



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(shortness of breath)

What you can do

- Cut down or stop smoking
- Try to stay away from places where the air is polluted
- Get your annual flu shot
- Gradually become more physically active
- Eat more healthy
- Talk to your doctor about your shortness of breath

Do you regularly remove safety hazards in your home?

- Why don't people remove hazards?
 - Difficulty making changes (need assistance to move items)
 - People may be reluctant to ask for assistance
 - People don't always think of safety in their home.



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(Safety hazards continued)

What you can do

- Plan a time to review your home
- Have a home visit by an occupational therapist to recommend appropriate equipment
- Ask for assistance to make repairs or renovations
- Check with local services to see if assistance is available



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Do you use special equipment or have difficulty with day to day activities?

Why don't people have the assistance they may need?

- Often people do not want to appear that they are in need of special assistance.
- People think that special equipment or asking for assistance will make them less independent.

Why don't people get the assistance they need (Con't)

- Your ability to complete tasks independently can vary day to day if you are having a change in health status.
- Difficulty making the required changes (need assistance to move items)
- People don't always stop and think about the safety of their actions

(Equipment & Activities Con't)

What you can do

- If you notice a significant change in your ability to complete activities ensure that your medical status is reviewed.



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(Equipment & Activities Con't)

What you can do

- Ensure that you receive training in the use of any special equipment from an occupational or physiotherapist to be certain that you are using it safely.
- Remind yourself that using special equipment or getting assistance will help you to remain more independent by avoiding a serious injury.
- Ensure that special devices are kept within close reach



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My Falls Prevention Plan

1. Have my vision checked.
2. Have my hearing checked.
3. Have my medications reviewed by my doctor or pharmacist.
4. Have my blood pressure checked.
5. Take better care of my feet and review the shoes I have to ensure they are safe and appropriate.

My Falls Prevention Plan

6. Participate in a regular exercise program.
7. Review my home for safety hazards
8. Learn more about equipment for home independence and safety.
9. Other



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Questions???

- Please let us know if we can contact you for feedback.



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