



PREVENT A FALL *before it happens*

Anyone can fall, but as you age the risk increases. Falls are the leading cause of serious injuries in older adults. Every year, 1 in 3 Alberta seniors will fall. The good news is that you can take steps to prevent falls.

Keep active

Exercise for strength and balance

Check your medications

Talk to your doctor or pharmacist

Watch your step

Wherever you are

Speak up about dizziness

Tell your doctor and take action



Anyone can fall, but as you age the risk increases. The good news is that you can take steps to prevent a fall. Answer this checklist to see if you are at risk of falling.

	Yes	No
1. Have you had a slip, trip or fall in the past year?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2. Have you stopped doing daily activities because you were afraid of falling?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3. Do you feel your muscles are weaker or is it harder to stand up from a chair or toilet?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
4. Do you ever have trouble walking or feel unsteady on your feet?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
5. Do you feel dizzy when you stand up?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
6. Has it been more than 1 year since your doctor or pharmacist reviewed your medications?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
7. Has it been more than 1 year since you had your eyes checked?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
8. Do you experience urine leakage or have to hurry to make it to the bathroom?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

If you answered YES to 1 or more questions, you may be at risk of a fall. See the next page for tips to keep you independent and prevent a fall before it happens.

Adapted from Hamilton County Fall Prevention Task Force.
Personal Risk Factors: Falls Prevention Checklist
<http://www.fallpreventiontaskforce.org/tools.htm>

Anyone can Fall
Prevent it from happening to you
www.findingbalancealberta.ca

If you answered YES to the checklist questions, here are some tips to help reduce your risk of falling:

1. One in three seniors will fall each year. The good news is that you can take steps to prevent a fall. Always tell your healthcare provider if you have had a fall even if you have not hurt yourself. People fall for many reasons. These are called risk factors and include health conditions and choices you make. Your healthcare provider can help you address your risk factors. Remember, falls are not a normal part of aging.
2. Fear of falling may be a natural reaction after you have had a fall. If your fear is causing you to reduce your daily activities then fear of falling can become harmful. Daily exercise and activity can help you stay strong, healthy and independent. Start slowly and build your confidence so you can do the things you enjoy.
3. Weak muscles can put you at risk of falling. It is important to be active at least 30 minutes a day to stay strong. Talk to your healthcare provider about the type of exercise that is best for you. Try gardening, walking or taking a group exercise class.
4. If you shuffle your feet or hold on to the wall or furniture for balance, talk to your healthcare provider. They can assess your muscle strength, balance and walking. They may suggest an activity program or assistive device, such as a walker or cane, to help you stay steady on your feet.
5. It is important to tell your doctor if you feel dizzy or faint. There are many causes of dizziness, including some medications. If you feel dizzy when you stand up, your blood pressure may be dropping when you stand. This is called postural hypotension. Ask your doctor to check your blood pressure when lying down and then standing up. Not drinking enough fluids can also cause dizziness so drink 6 to 8 glasses of fluids each day.
6. Have your medications reviewed at least once a year. Ask if you still need the medication and if you are taking the right dose. Some medications do not mix well with others. Tell your doctor or pharmacist everything that you are taking including prescriptions, over the counter medicines, vitamins and herbs. Alcohol can interact with medications and increase your risk of falling so be careful. Never take anyone else's medication.
7. As we age, our eyes change. They become more sensitive to glare, need more time to adjust to sudden light changes and lose depth perception. Problems with your vision or your glasses can increase your risk of falling. Have your eyes checked every year. Keep walkways, stairs and paths well-lit. Always take your bifocals off when walking and on the stairs. If you wear multifocal lenses, bend your head down to look out the top of your glasses when using stairs. Hold the handrails when walking on stairs.
8. Rushing to the toilet can cause you to fall. Keep your path to the bathroom well-lit and free of clutter. Talk to your doctor about ways to help manage leaking urine. Try using a commode or underpants with pads if you worry about making it to the bathroom in time.

For more information on how to prevent a fall, visit
www.findingbalancealberta.ca
or call Health Link Alberta toll free at
1-866-408-LINK for more information.