

# 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](http://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.

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**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. Wear shoes, not socks or slippers in your home.

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**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.

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**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.

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**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. Visit [www.preventfalls.ca](http://www.preventfalls.ca) for more information on home safety. A safe home can help you maintain an independent lifestyle.

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

Share this checklist with your family, close friends, or healthcare providers so they can help support your efforts to prevent falls.

To learn more, visit [www.PreventFalls.ca](http://www.PreventFalls.ca)

# Most falls are preventable!

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

Information in this checklist is based on "Stay On Your Feet Western Australia" and has been adapted by the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority.

