

Protecting Yourself from Falls at Home



UHN

Am I at Risk for a Fall?

- Do you ever feel dizzy?
- Do you take four or more medications a day?
- Do you drink alcohol?
- Do you have foot problems?
- Do you have weak muscles or stiff joints?
- Do you have to rush to the bathroom?
- Do you have problems seeing or hearing?
- Do you have trouble concentrating?
- Are you ever short of breath?
- Do you walk in places that are uneven, slippery or icy?
- Do you ever lose your balance?

If you answered yes to several of these questions, you may be at risk for falls. Talk to your doctor about this.

This information is to be used for informational purposes only and is not intended as a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. Please consult your health care provider for advice about a specific medical condition. A single copy of these materials may be reprinted for non-commercial personal use only.

© 2010 University Health Network. All rights reserved.

Author: UHN Fall Safety and Restraints Committee

Created: 05/2005

Form: D-5120 (06/2010)



How Can I Prevent a Fall?

- Get up slowly from your bed or chair. This prevents a sudden drop in blood pressure. Ask for help if you need it.
- Watch for slippery surfaces when you walk, especially in the winter.
- Have your doctor check your blood pressure, eyesight and ears regularly.
- Review your medication regularly with your doctor.
- Use the same drug store for all of your prescription and non-prescription medication. Many drug stores will track your medication and tell you about possible problems or side effects.
- Wear shoes that fit well and have non-slip soles. Do not wear socks on tiles or wooden floors.
- Do exercises that improve your strength and balance. Chair-based exercises, stretching and walking are good examples. Before starting an exercise program talk to your doctor or nurse.

Home Safety Ideas:

Be aware that most falls occur in the kitchen or bathroom. You may want to consider the following home safety ideas:

- Long reachers or grabbers (available from medical supplies stores).
- Long-handled mops to clean spills
- Step stools with rubber feet.
- Rubber/non-skid bathtub mats.
- A grab bar in the shower or tub.
- A rubber-backed bathmat.
- A bath bench.
- A night light in hallway and bathroom.



University Health Network
Toronto General Hospital Toronto Western Hospital Princess Margaret Hospital

- Light switches that are easy to reach.
- Handrails on both sides of stairs.
- Skid-free mats for all area rugs.
- Shoes with good support.
- A walking cane that fits well and has rubber feet.
- Electrical cords that are kept out of the way.

Do You Know?

- One in three older adults fall each year.
- Of those who fall, more than 1 in 3 are seriously injured.
- 40% of nursing home admissions are due to falls.
- Falls are the most common cause of injury and the 6th leading cause of death for seniors.
- Women are 3 times more likely than man to be hospitalized because of a fall.
- 40% of falls treated in hospitals involve hip fractures.
- Half of the people who fracture their hip are never able to function again the way they did before the fall.
- Canadians spend about \$3 billion a year on medical care of injuries caused by falls.



Prevention Starts with You!

My greatest risks are:

Things I will do to prevent falls:

Adapted From: RNAO Nurses Association of Ontario Nursing Best Practice Guidelines and Fraser Health Authority

If you are interested in joining an exercise program nearest you, please call **211**, which is the **Toronto Community Information Line**.



University Health Network
Toronto General Hospital Toronto Western Hospital Princess Margaret Hospital