

Preventing Falls in Older Adults

Participants

1. Facts on Falls

- Most common cause of injury for seniors
- 1 in 3 fall each year, half- more than once
- Almost half hurt themselves and fear can reduce activity
- Most happen in the home, bathroom, and kitchen and on stairs.

2. Causes of Falling

- Poor balance and weak legs
- Having falls before
- Not paying attention
- Rushing or hurrying
- Not asking for help when needed
- Having unsafe conditions
- Wearing unsafe footwear
- Taking the wrong dose of medication
- Drinking alcohol

3. How to prevent falling

- **Pay attention**
 1. Take time to slow down
 2. Plan ahead
 3. Ask for help when you need it
 4. Take time to get up from your bed or chair
 5. Drink enough water
- **Improve your bone health**
 1. Prevent osteoporosis
 2. Take enough calcium
 3. Take enough vitamin d
 4. Eat healthy meals and don't skip meals
 5. Senior's calcium needs: 1200 mg/day for women, 1000 mg/day (50-70 years old) for men, 1200 mg/day (70+) for men.
 6. Best food sources of calcium: cow's milk, goat's milk, fortified soy milk, tofu, yogurt, cheese. Good sources: salmon or sardines with bones. Other sources: almonds, navy beans, white beans, spinach, bok choy
 7. Recommended daily vitamin d supplement: 400 IU/day for both women and men (50-70 years old), 800 IU for men and women (70+ years old)
 8. Best food sources of vitamin d: salmon, rainbow trout, herring. Good sources: cow's milk, goat's milk, fortified soy milk, sardines, halibut. Other sources: egg yolks, mackerel, non-hydrogenated margarine.

- **Wear safe footwear**
 1. Hurt feet = less active = more chance of falling
 2. Diabetes then see a foot doctor
 3. Wear shoes with non-slip soles and low, wide heels
 4. Make sure your shoes/slippers fit well
 5. Do not go barefoot
 6. Do not wear backless shoes/slippers
 7. Check your equipment – remove any loose mats, rugs etc.
 - **Take your medications as directed**
 1. Alcohol affects how medications work
 2. Sleeping pills increase the chance of falling
 3. Tell your doctor ALL medication you are taking
 4. Have a pharmacist review your medicines every year
 - **Vision and hearing checked**
 1. Have your vision and hearing checked
 2. Wear your glasses and hearing aids
 - **Make your home safer**
 1. Have grab bars in bathtubs
 2. Use a non-slip mat inside and outside your tub/shower
 3. Keep your toilet paper roll within easy reach
 4. Improve lighting in home
 5. Have handrails on both sides
 6. Always turn on the lights
 7. Clear pathways and look out for things
 8. Remove scatter mats and area rugs
 - **Get moving**
 1. Begin regular exercise
 2. Make your bones strong
 3. Improve your balance, coordination and leg strength
 4. Try walking, dancing, bowling and doing tai chi
- 4. Alberta Healthy Living Program**
- Education, group exercises, support classes for free
 - www.ahs.ca/cdmcalgaryzone.asp, 403-943-2584
- 5. If you fall**
- Make sure to check for injury before getting up
 - See a doctor if you are hurt
 - Have your medications checked by the doctor
 - Don't let your fear stop you
- 6. Resources**
- Finding Balance www.findingbalancealberta.ca
 - Bone health www.osteoporosis.ca
 - Free 24 hour telephone health information, nurse / nutritionist advice with interpretation - **811**