

Make a Move

Falls prevention and the environment



English
[DOH-6860]

Know your risks and know what to do

Uneven footpaths

Report any problems with footpaths or walkways to your local council. These may include broken footpaths, tree roots or rubbish in the street.

Water spills in bathrooms and floors of shopping centres, cafes, and other buildings

Report any spills to staff or centre management. If you have a fall, report it to management or staff.

Poorly lit places

Avoid poorly lit places. If street lighting is inadequate or damaged contact the electricity company listed on your electricity bill. Ask them to repair any damage or consider putting extra lighting in your area.

Stairs without hand rails

Take time to walk up and down stairs. If the area is in high use by the community (libraries, shopping centres etc) make a request to council to install a handrail.

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Make a Move

Falls prevention and medications



Know your risks and know what to do

Some medications may increase the risk of a fall injury

Review your medications with your doctor or pharmacist and ask about the side effects of the medication.

Certain medications from chemists, supermarkets and health food stores may react with medications prescribed by your doctor

Check with your doctor or pharmacist before using over-the-counter medicines.

Taking an incorrect dosage of medication is dangerous

Read medication labels in good light and follow instructions carefully. Use a pill organiser to avoid confusion when taking several medications.

Taking other people's medication

Avoid taking anyone else's prescribed medication.

Out of date medication

Do not use out of date medication; return them to your pharmacist for safe disposal.

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Falls prevention and vision



Know your risks and know what to do

Eye disorders such as glaucoma and cataracts

Have your eyes checked regularly by an optometrist and alert your doctor to any eye changes you may experience.

Poor lighting

75-100 watt globes are recommended; lights should also be shielded to reduce glare. Install a nightlight in the bedroom and hallway for better visibility late at night.

Balanced diet

Include plenty of leafy green and yellow vegetables, fruit and vitamins A and E in your diet.

Sudden changes in lighting

Allow your eyes to adjust when going from light to dark rooms and visa versa.

Stairs

Install lights at the top and bottom of stairs. Put marker strips on the edge of stairs and shelves to make them easier to see.

Walking with your reading glasses or bifocals on

Use two pairs of glasses – one for reading and one for walking.

Sunlight

Wear sunglasses and a hat to reduce glare when outside.

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Make a Move

Falls prevention and home hazards



Know your risks and know what to do

Unsecured scatter mats and floor rugs

Secure all scatter rugs. Avoid using mats or rugs.

Wet or slippery floors

Clean up spills as they occur.

Using the shower or bath

Use a non-slip mat. Install handrails. Use a bath seat for extra safety.

Poor lighting

Have adequate lighting in all rooms. Use a night light. Install good lighting in hallways, bathrooms and stairways.

A cluttered environment

Remove clutter and keep walkways clear.

Cords and cables

Remove cords and cables from walkways.

Stairs and steps

Install a hand rail. Paint the front edge of outside steps with a contrasting colour or adhesive, non-skid strip.

Assessment

Your local Aged Care Assessment Team (ACAT) can assist in assessing your home and health. They can be contacted through your local hospital.

Garden areas

Make sure that paths are even and free of moss. Keep paths free of garden tools.

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Falls prevention and chronic illness



Know your risks and know what to do

Identify your illness

Find out as much as possible about your condition, to be aware of the symptoms and side effects.

Poor balance

Take precautions if your illness causes dizziness, stiffness, or difficulty in walking.

Medications and other treatments

Make sure you take your medications regularly at the same time each day
Have a balanced diet and exercise to help maintain good health.

Support

There are a number of organisations who support people with chronic illness eg Diabetes, Parkinson's Disease – ask your doctor for details.

Home hazards

Look at your home and make changes that will make it safer for you (see home hazards fact sheet).

Assessment

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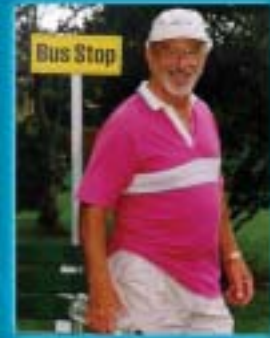
Vitamin D deficiency

Get at least 30 minutes exposure to sunlight each week and see your doctor about vitamin D supplements.

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Falls prevention and physical activity



Know your risks and know what to do

General health

Visit your doctor for a general check up and tell them the type of exercise you want to start.

The right exercise

Find an exercise that is fun and you enjoy doing which will increase the chance of maintaining it.

Overdoing it

Work to your own pace and capability.

Breathing

If you can talk while you walk or exercise then it is gentle exercise.

Accredited teachers

Telephone your local council for activities and teachers in your area.

Shoes and clothing

Wear shoes appropriate for the activity that are supportive and fit well.
Wear comfortable clothes.

Fluids

Drink plenty of fluids while exercising. Drink six to eight glasses of water per day.

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Falls prevention, balance and walking style



Know your risks and know what to do

Try not to rush when standing up

Move more slowly. Talk to your doctor about any balance changes or dizziness.

Medications

Check with your doctor if any of your medications cause loss of balance or dizziness.

Low blood pressure

Have your blood pressure checked regularly and follow your doctor's advice.

Inner ear problems

Move slowly to avoid dizziness and see your doctor for treatment.

Low fluid intake

Drink six to eight glasses of water per day.

Using a cane or walker that is the wrong height

Have your cane or walker checked by your doctor or health worker for the correct height.

Fear of falling

Discuss your fear of falling with a doctor or health worker.

Uneven surfaces

Watch where you put your feet and avoid slippery, wet or uneven surfaces.

Hazards

Keep your environment free of trip hazards such as rugs and cords.

Shuffling

Make sure you pick up your feet as you walk rather than shuffle.

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Falls prevention and osteoporosis



Know your risks and know what to do

Getting older

Eat a diet high in calcium, get ten minutes of sunlight three days per week and exercise to help prevent or slow bone density loss.

Not enough calcium

Just three to four serves of dairy food (or 1200mg-1500mg) will provide enough calcium for your daily needs. Include milk, yogurt, cheese and canned fish with bone (eg salmon). One serve equals 1 cup of milk (250 mls), one tub of yogurt (200 gms) or two slices of cheese (35 gms).

If you are on a low fat diet, there are a variety of low fat dairy products and some of these are calcium enriched.

Discuss calcium and vitamin D supplements with your doctor or other treatment options.

Lack of exercise

30 minutes of gentle exercise on most days of the week is recommended.

Smoking

Be a non-smoker.

Alcohol

More than two drinks per day increases your risk of poor health.

Underweight

People who are thin and have a small build have an increased chance of osteoporosis. Try to maintain your ideal weight.

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Falls prevention and footwear



Know your risks and know what to do

Unsafe footwear

Wear good, supportive fit shoes (lace-ups are best). Heels should be low, broad, and round edged. Soles should have a non-slip surface.

Loose fitting slippers or socks

Wear closed in slippers with good support. Avoid wearing socks without shoes.

Walking

Make sure the shoe suits the activity, is supportive and fits well.

Heel height

Wear low heeled shoes.

Sole

Make sure that the sole has a cushioning effect. Try to wear shoes that are slip resistant.

Worn shoes

Replace old shoes or have them repaired to reduce risk of tripping.

Shoe top

A shoe with a high heeled collar that covers the ankle will give good support.

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