



# ANYONE CAN FALL

*Prevent it from happening to you*

## CHECK YOUR MEDICATIONS

Older adults want to live active, independent lives. As you age, the way some medications affect you can change and increase your risk of falling.

Medications that relax you, help you sleep or improve your mood can increase your risk of falling.

## *Keep your independence*

*Anyone can fall, but as you grow older, the risk increases. Every year one in three older adults will fall. Falls prevention isn't just about stopping falls before they happen. It's about keeping your independence.*

**Finding  
Balance**

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**To learn more about preventing falls, visit**  
**[www.findingbalancenb.ca](http://www.findingbalancenb.ca)**

## Take steps to prevent a fall!

- Use only one pharmacy to fill your prescriptions and keep a current medication list in your wallet and at home.
- Once a year, put all your medications in a bag and take them to your primary care provider (family physician or nurse practitioner) or pharmacist for them to review. The bag should include any over-the-counter or prescription drugs, herbs, vitamins, dietary supplements, and topical treatments such as ointments and creams.
- Take along a friend or relative to your appointments if you think you might need help to understand what your primary care provider tells you. Write down the information your provider gives you about your medicines or your health condition.
- Keep track of side effects or possible drug interactions and let your primary care provider or pharmacist know right away about any unexpected symptoms or changes in the way you feel.
- Some medications may cause a drop in your blood pressure which may increase your risk of falling.
- Alcohol can affect your medications. Be careful. Talk to your primary care provider or pharmacist about your alcohol intake.
- If your medications make you feel drowsy or dizzy, talk to your primary care provider or pharmacist. They may need to change the type, dose or time of day you take them.
- Ask your primary care provider about how to deal with sleep problems without using sleeping pills.
- Do not share your prescription medications or take another person's medications.
- Be sure that you safely store your medications, as per the manufacturer's instructions.
- Check your medications' expiry date before using them and return expired or unused medications to your local pharmacy for proper disposal. Talk to your pharmacist if you have any questions about the safe disposal of medications.

## With each new prescription, ask your pharmacist or primary care provider the following questions:

- What is this medication used for?
- When and how should I take it?
- How long do I need to take it?
- What are the potential side effects?
- Will it increase my chance of falling?
- What should I do if I have side effects?
- What should I do if I miss a dose?
- Will it affect any of the other medications I am taking?
- Should I avoid any food or beverages?
- What needs to be done to monitor this medication?

## Other helpful tips

Ask your pharmacist or primary care provider if you are:

- Having trouble swallowing your medications
- Having trouble opening your medications or handling your pills
- Having difficulty reading the medication labels
- Finding it hard to remember to take your medication

## Falls are not a normal part of aging.

### Talk to your primary care provider if you have had a fall.

Original concept developed by the City of Edmonton, Capital Health Edmonton and the Alberta Centre for Injury Control & Research.

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