



# Be Falls Smart...

## In What You Do - Medications

Older adults want to live active and independent lives. Falls are not a natural part of aging. As you age, the way some medicines affect you can change. Taking certain medications or combinations of medication can increase your risk for falling. The good news is that you can take steps to prevent falls.

### **FACTS:**

- **Medications include: prescriptions, over-the-counter pills, vitamins and herbal supplements.**
- **Medications that relax you, help you sleep, or improve your mood can increase your risk of falling.**
- **Calcium and Vitamin D help to keep your bones strong.**

### **Medication Safety Tips:**

- Talk to your pharmacist and doctor if pills make you drowsy or dizzy. They may need to change the type, dose, or time of day you take them.
- When you stand up, pause, get your balance and then move.
- Alcohol affects medications. Be careful. Talk to your doctor and pharmacist.
- Use only one pharmacy to fill prescriptions. It is important that your pharmacist knows all the medications you take to predict side-effects.



- Keep a current medication list in your wallet and at home. Review them yearly with your pharmacist and doctor.
- Only use your prescribed medications, never someone else's.
- Check the expiry date and return outdated medications to your pharmacist.

**When you are prescribed a new medication, ask your pharmacist and doctor 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 side effects?
- Will it increase my chance of falling?
- What should I do if I have a side effect?
- What should I do if I miss a dose?
- Will it affect any of the other medication I am taking?
- Should I avoid any food or beverages?
- What needs to be done to monitor this medication?

**Other Helpful Tips:**

Your pharmacist, doctor and nurse can give you some advice if you are:

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

**If you have had a fall or near fall, talk with your doctor.**

**For more information:**

**Seniors' Health Website - Fall Prevention:**

[www.albertahealthservices.ca/4356.asp](http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/4356.asp)

**Finding Balance Website:**

[www.findingbalancealberta.ca](http://www.findingbalancealberta.ca)

**Health Link Alberta:**

In Calgary Area (403) 943-LINK (5465)  
Toll Free in Alberta 1-866-408-LINK (5465)

**...Prevent the Fall  
Before it Happens!**