

Wellness Articles

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If you would like to be added to the distribution list for these articles, please email: Rebecca.johnson2@albertahealthservices.ca. You will receive a monthly email containing articles for the upcoming four weeks.

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Take steps to help prevent falls

November is Falls Prevention Month.

Falls happen. But some can be prevented.

Every year, thousands of older adults fall and hurt themselves. Falls are one of the main causes of injury and loss of independence in people ages 65 and older.

People fall for many reasons. Maybe they lose their footing when stepping off a street curb. Or they may fall after getting dizzy from taking medicines. Some falls may be related to the effects of aging, such as muscle weakness or delayed reflexes. Or falls may be related to the results of a stroke.

Since each person's risks are a bit different, talk to your doctor about which of the tips below might help you.

- Be active. Exercise regularly
- Build strength
 - Target lower limb muscle strength using resistance training and weight-bearing activities
- Challenge your balance
 - Learn to do a few exercises for strength and balance. Practicing these each day can help you stay active and independent.

- Maintain bone health through exercise and a calcium-rich diet

- Talk to your doctor to be sure you are getting enough vitamin D and calcium.
- Be sure you are drinking enough water, especially if the weather is hot.
- Take care of yourself.
 - Have your vision and hearing checked each year or anytime you notice a change. If you have trouble seeing and hearing, you might not be able to avoid objects that make you lose your balance.
 - If you tend to feel light-headed when you stand up quickly, take the time to get up slowly from your bed or chair. When you wake up, it may help to sit up first and count slowly to 10 before you try to stand up. And after you stand up, stay still for a few seconds before you move.
 - Call your doctor if you are dizzy and lose your balance. You may have a health problem that needs treatment, such as a blood pressure or inner ear problem. Or you may be having a side effect from a medicine that you take.
 - Wear low-heeled shoes that fit well and give your feet good support. Use footwear with non-skid soles. Repair or replace worn heels and soles.
 - If you use a walker or cane, make sure it is fitted to you. If you use a cane, replace the rubber tip when it becomes worn.