



Staying on Your Feet

A guide to help older adults prevent falls

This guide will help you:

- ✓ Identify what puts you at risk for falls
- ✓ Learn how to prevent falls
- ✓ Find local and online resources.



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www.findingbalanceontario.ca

SouthWesthealthline.ca

You can prevent falls

As an older adult, you have a greater chance of falling. A fall can cause serious injury and affect the quality of your life. The good news is that falls can be prevented.

There are many reasons why older adults may fall. These reasons are called ‘risk factors’. Knowing your risk factors will help you know what to do to prevent a fall.

The “Staying on your feet” guide helps you know:

- ✓ What puts you at risk of falling
- ✓ What you can do to prevent falls

How to use this guide

Your health care provider can help you:



[My Snapshot](#)

1. Review the [My Snapshot](#) tool. This is a list of the risk factors that put older adults at risk of falling.
2. Identify what puts you at risk of falling and what may be causing this.
3. Review what you can do to reduce each risk.
4. Find the local and online resources that are available to help you. You can have a printed copy of this information to keep at home or have it sent to you by e-mail so you can review it online.
5. Decide what you would like to do and fill out [My plan to prevent falls!](#) on pages 34 and 35. By carrying out your plan, you reduce your chance of falling. Even small steps can make a big difference.

You can use this guide again in the future to take another ‘snapshot’ of your risks and make new plans.

For helpful tips for all older adults, go to [You can prevent falls!](#) (page 36) at the end of this guide.

My Snapshot



1. Select the risk factors that apply.
2. Read the information about each risk factor to learn what to do and where to get information or help.

Risk factor	Examples	Page
<input type="checkbox"/> Fear and social isolation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limiting your activity due to a fear of falling • Feeling lonely, anxious, or depressed • Unable to get out due to lack of transportation 	4
<input type="checkbox"/> Taking certain medications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking 3 or more medications a day • Feeling dizzy or unsteady after changing medications • Taking sedatives, fluid pills, blood pressure pills, or recreational drugs 	6
<input type="checkbox"/> Balance problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeling unsteady or having trouble balancing when standing or walking • Difficulty getting up after sitting or lying • Difficulty getting out of the tub 	8
<input type="checkbox"/> Not enough physical activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor physical fitness due to inactivity • Shuffling feet when walking • Weak muscles, stiff joints, or osteoarthritis 	10
<input type="checkbox"/> Poor nutrition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor diet, not eating healthy foods • Missing meals or not eating enough 	12
<input type="checkbox"/> Dizziness and fainting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeling dizzy • Fainting or losing consciousness 	14
<input type="checkbox"/> Vision problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blurred or double vision • Difficulty seeing steps or walking in dim light 	16

Continued on the next page →

My Snapshot... continued

Risk factor	Examples	Page
<input type="checkbox"/> Indoor hazards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Floors are cluttered with papers, electrical cords, shoes, or other objects • Loose mats or area rugs • Poor lighting • No one to help with household chores 	18
<input type="checkbox"/> Outdoor hazards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uneven or icy walkways • Poor lighting • No one to help with home repairs 	20
<input type="checkbox"/> Problems with bladder control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rushing to the bathroom • Bladder leaking or accidents 	22
<input type="checkbox"/> Problems with memory and concentration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trouble concentrating • Difficulty remembering • Dementia or Alzheimer’s disease 	24
<input type="checkbox"/> Alcohol use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having more than 3 standard drinks a day • Having more than 10 (for women) or 15 (for men) standard drinks a week • Drinking to deal with feelings, relieve pain, or help you sleep 	26
<input type="checkbox"/> Foot problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shoes that don’t fit or support your feet • Pain, swelling, or loss of feeling in your feet • Open sores, corns, or thickened toenails 	28
<input type="checkbox"/> Poor bone health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Osteoporosis • Not enough calcium and vitamin D in your diet • Broken bones after a simple fall 	30
<input type="checkbox"/> Hearing problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hearing loss or a build-up of wax in your ears • Hearing aids that don’t work or need cleaning 	32

Risk factor: Fear and social isolation



[My Snapshot](#)

What can cause this (check all that apply to you)

- A previous fall or 'near fall'.
- Falling was such a bad experience that you are afraid to go out.
- Loss of independence or control.
- Loss of confidence in your abilities.
- Loss of a loved one.
- Feeling lonely, sad, anxious, or depressed.
- Poor physical or mental health.
- Not being physically active.
- Unable to drive or find transportation to get out.

What you can do (choose 2-3 that you can take action on)

- Think about your fears and what is causing them. This activity can help you know what type of help you need.
- Call your doctor if you have concerns about your physical or mental health.
- Take control of your own safety and be assertive. For example, ask for a seat on a crowded bus.
- Wear a personal alarm or carry a phone with you.
- Practice skills to boost self-confidence.
- Think positively.
- Talk about your feelings with a family member, close friend, or a health care provider.
- Attend social events or join a club.
- Arrange for a volunteer to visit you.
- Make a plan to gradually become more active.
- Schedule a regular time with friends to meet or call each other and offer help.
- Call local agencies to see if you can volunteer. For example, agencies such as the Alzheimer Society, Red Cross, United Way, Victorian Order of Nurses (VON), hospitals, schools, or libraries may need volunteers.
- Use a taxi or the transit service for seniors in your community.

Where to get information or help

Phone **211** and they will connect you to the right place.



[My Snapshot](#)

Resource Name	Contact Information
Volunteer Connection – Perth and Huron Counties	Phone: 1-866-743-7818 Web: perthcounty.cioc.ca/volunteer/
SouthWesthealthline.ca: Adult Day Programs	Toll Free: 1-800-811-5146 (CCAC) Web: www.southwesthealthline.ca/listServices.aspx?id=10347&region=HuronPerth
SouthWesthealthline.ca: Personal Emergency Response Systems	Toll Free: 1-800-811-5146 (CCAC) Web: www.southwesthealthline.ca/listServices.aspx?id=10108&region=HuronPerth
Canadian Medicalert Foundation	Toll Free: 1-800-668-1507 Web: www.medicalert.ca
Transportation	
EasyRide – Low Cost Door to Door Transportation Service for Older Adults (Huron & Perth)	Toll Free: 1-877-500-9875 Web: www.onecaresupport.ca/Services/EasyRideTransportation
Stratford Transit City Bus Service	Phone: 519-271-0250 x264 Web: www.stratfordcanada.ca/en/livehere/transit.asp
SouthWesthealthline.ca: Accessible Transportation	Toll Free: 1-800-811-5146 (CCAC) Web: www.southwesthealthline.ca/listServices.aspx?id=10109
Stratford Parallel Transit For Physically Challenged Individuals.	Phone: 519-271-4100 Web: www.stratfordcanada.ca/en/livehere/paralleltransit.asp

Risk factor: Taking certain medications



[My Snapshot](#)

What can cause this (check all that apply to you)

- Taking products that could interfere with your prescription medication, such as over-the-counter medications (those you buy without a prescription), vitamins, herbal remedies, or alcohol.
- Taking your medications incorrectly. Not being sure what medications you are taking, how many you should take, or why you need to take them. Missing doses or taking too many doses.
- Taking expired medication.
- Using someone else's medications.
- Your doctor and pharmacist are not aware of everything you are taking and the side effects you are having.

What you can do (choose 2-3 that you can take action on)

- Use the same pharmacy all the time** so your pharmacist knows all of the medications you are taking.
- Have your pharmacist review all the medications, vitamins, and herbal remedies you are taking. Have them reviewed at least once a year and whenever any medication is added, changed, or stopped. This is known as the MedCheck program.
- Before taking any medication, vitamins, or herbal remedies ask your pharmacist about possible side effects and drug interactions.
- Ask your doctor or pharmacist if you should avoid alcohol.
- Follow the directions for taking medications, particularly pain medication. Ask your pharmacist if you are unclear about how to take something.
- Tell your doctor or pharmacist about any side effects you are having.
- Never borrow or lend medications.
- When you see any health care provider, bring all of your medications (pill bottles and blister packs) as well as any over-the-counter medications and vitamins.
- Return unused or expired medications to your pharmacy.



[My Snapshot](#)

Where to get information or help

Phone **211** and they will connect you to the right place.

Resource Name	Contact Information
Speak To Your Doctor or Nurse Practitioner	Add Their Phone Number Here:
Speak To Your Pharmacist	Add Their Phone Number Here:
MedsCheck Program	Toll Free: 1-866-255-6701
Huron Perth Addiction & Mental Health Alliance – Can Provide Assistance With Medication Management	Toll Free: 1-888-829-7484 Web: www.hpamhalliance.ca
Centre for Addiction and Mental Health	Toll Free: 1-800-463-6273 Web: www.camh.net
Finding Balance: Check Your Medication	Web: www.findingbalanceontario.ca/index.php/check-your-medication.html
Understanding Potential Interactions with Prescription Drugs	Web: www.thehealthline.ca/pdfs/FallsCoalitionDrugInteractions.pdf



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Risk factor: Balance problems



[My Snapshot](#)

What can cause this (check all that apply to you)

- Your reflexes may get slower with age.
- Getting up too quickly.
- Not enough physical activity.
- Poor vision or hearing.
- Drug interactions or the effects of alcohol.
- Shoes that don't fit or support your feet.
- Not using the correct walker or cane, or not using them properly.
- Not enough sleep.
- Missing meals or not eating enough.
- If you have a medical condition.
- Medication.

What you can do (choose 2-3 that you can take action on)

- Talk with your doctor about your medical conditions and medications. Ask what can help you improve your balance.
- Take your time. Do not rush to answer the phone or the door.
- Sit in chairs with armrests and a firm seat and back. Hold the armrests as you get up slowly. Sit on the edge of a bed before standing up.
- Use your cane or walker as directed. Gradually increase how far and how long you walk.
- Take part in community activities that improve your balance such as Tai Chi and yoga.
- Visit a physiotherapist for a personal exercise plan to improve your balance. You may need a referral from your doctor.
- If your vision is poor, see your doctor or optometrist. Make sure you have glasses with the right prescription.
- Wear well-fitting and supportive footwear.
- Plan for 3 meals and 1 to 3 small snacks each day. Choose foods from the 4 food groups at each meal.
- Drink plenty of fluids such as water and do not drink alcohol.

Check with your health care provider before starting a new exercise program.

Where to get information or help



Phone **211** and they will connect you to the right place.

[My Snapshot](#)

Resource Name	Contact Information
SouthWesthealthline.ca: Exercise and Falls Prevention Programs	Toll Free: 1-800-811-5146 (CCAC) Web: Types of Classes www.southwesthealthline.ca/libraryContent.aspx?id=20572 Web: Locations of Classes www.southwesthealthline.ca/listServices.aspx?id=10986
SouthWesthealthline.ca: Rehabilitation Services	Toll Free: 1-800-811-5146 (CCAC) Web: Outpatient www.southwesthealthline.ca/listServices.aspx?id=10826&region=HuronPerth Web: Private Pay Clinics www.southwesthealthline.ca/listServices.aspx?id=10827&region=HuronPerth
SouthWesthealthline.ca: Physiotherapy Services – Publicly Funded Clinics	Toll Free: 1-800-811-5146 (CCAC) Web: www.southwesthealthline.ca/listServices.aspx?id=11019&region=HuronPerth
Finding Balance Ontario: Keep Active	Web: www.findingbalanceontario.ca/index.php/keep-active.html
Finding Balance Ontario: Watch Your Step	Web: www.findingbalanceontario.ca/index.php/watch-your-step.html
Minds In Motion: A Fitness and Social Program For People With Symptoms of Dementia.	Huron County: 1-800-561-5012 Perth County: 1-888-797-1882
Taoist Tai Chi Society: Stratford Branch	Phone: 519-273-5614
Osteoporosis Canada: Too Fit to Fracture Program	Web: www.osteoporosis.ca/osteoporosis-and-you/too-fit-to-fracture/

Risk factor: Not enough physical activity



[My Snapshot](#)

What can cause this (check all that apply to you)

- Not eating regularly, or not eating enough food to keep up your energy and strength.
- You get too tired or out of breath during activity due to heart or lung problems. Smoking.
- Injury, pain, or discomfort.
- Medical conditions that affect the muscles and joints such as arthritis, osteoporosis, multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's disease, or stroke.
- Your muscles feel tight or stiff.
- Lack of motivation, activity needs too much effort.
- Fear of falling or injuring yourself.

What you can do (choose 2-3 that you can take action on)

- Follow the Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines for Older Adults.
- Get a total of 150 minutes of physical activity each week. You can break it up into short periods of 10 minutes or more. Examples of moderate-to-vigorous activities include brisk walking, dancing, and swimming.
- Use a walker or cane that is recommended by your health care provider to use less energy during daily tasks. Pace yourself and plan time to rest between activities.
- Stop smoking or reduce how much you smoke each day.
- Make a plan. Choose an activity to do regularly and gradually do more. For example, if you choose walking, start with short walks and gradually walk longer.
- Join an exercise or walking program designed for seniors.
- Talk with your doctor about your pain and/or discomfort. Write down:
 - When you feel pain, what activities cause the pain, and what you do to relieve the pain?

Check with your health care provider before starting a new exercise program.

Where to get information or help



[My Snapshot](#)

Phone **211** and they will connect you to the right place.

Resource Name	Contact Information
SouthWesthealthline.ca: Exercise and Falls Prevention Programs	Toll Free: 1-800-811-5146 (CCAC) Web: Types of Classes www.southwesthealthline.ca/libraryContent.aspx?id=20572 Web: Locations of Classes www.southwesthealthline.ca/listServices.aspx?id=10986
Walking & Exercise Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact your local Recreation Department or Community Centre. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Stratford Lakeside Active Adults Association – 519-271-4310 ○ St. Marys Friendship Centre – 519-284-3272 ○ Stratford-Perth YMCA – 519-271-0480 ○ MacKay Centre for Seniors in Goderich – 519-524-6660 ○ North Perth Seniors Programs – 519-291-1490 ○ Central Huron YMCA – 519-482-3655 ○ VON Perth-Huron – 1-800-265-5176 ○ One Care Huron-Perth – 1-877-502-8277 ○ South West Self-Management Program – 1-855-463-5692 • Walk around your local arena, mall, or school.
Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines for Older Adults	Toll Free: 1-888-334-9769 Web: www.csep.ca/CMFiles/Guidelines/CSEP_PAGuidelines_older-adults_en.pdf
Finding Balance Ontario: Keep Active	Web: www.findingbalanceontario.ca/index.php/keep-active.html
Minds In Motion: A Fitness and Social Program For People With Symptoms of Dementia.	Huron County: 1-800-561-5012 Perth County: 1-888-797-1882

Risk factor: Poor nutrition



[My Snapshot](#)

What can cause this (check all that apply to you)

- Being widowed or isolated.
- Skipping meals or not drinking enough fluids.
- Not eating a variety of healthy foods. Not getting enough fibre in your diet.
- Having poor mobility.
- Not getting enough vitamins and minerals.

What you can do (choose 2-3 that you can take action on)

- Speak to a registered dietitian about your eating habits. If you have little appetite, try eating smaller amounts of food more often.
- Follow Canada's Food Guide. Try to have the recommended servings from all 4 food groups each day:

Grain Products	6 to 7 servings a day
Vegetables and Fruit	7 servings a day
Milk and Alternatives	3 servings a day
Meat and Alternatives	2 to 3 servings a day

- Eat 3 balanced meals each day. Use the "Plate Method" to help you.

Fill half your plate with vegetables

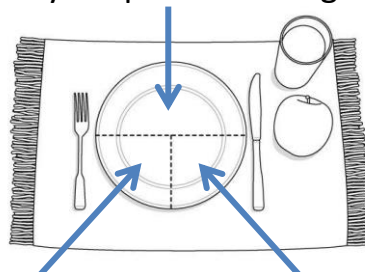


Image used with permission from Hamilton Health Sciences

Fill one-quarter of your plate with a starch like rice, pasta, or potatoes

Fill one-quarter of your plate with a protein like eggs, meat, beans, or fish

- Choose foods high in fibre at each meal such as fruits and vegetables, whole grains, beans, and lentils.
- Drink fluids, such as water, often. As you get older, your sense of thirst declines, so drink even when you're not thirsty!
- If you are over 50, take a Vitamin D supplement (400 IU) each day.

Where to get information or help



Phone **211** and they will connect you to the right place.

[My Snapshot](#)

Resource Name	Contact Information
Eat Right Ontario (Speak to a Registered Dietitian for FREE)	Toll Free: 1-877-510-5102 Web: www.eatrightontario.ca
SouthWesthealthline.ca: Meals on Wheels Delivery Services	Toll Free: 1-800-811-5146 (CCAC) Web: www.southwesthealthline.ca/listServices.aspx?id=10107&region=HuronPerth
Your Family Health Team: If you are part of one, they may have nutrition services available.	Add Their Phone Number Here:
Canada's Food Guide	Web: www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/food-guide-aliment/basics-base/quantit-eng.php Web: Advice for adults over 50 years old www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/food-guide-aliment/choose-choix/advice-conseil/adult50-eng.php
Nutri-eSCREEN through Eat Right Ontario.	Web: www.nutritionscreen.ca/escreen/ A quick survey to help you find out how you are doing with choosing foods. Online ONLY.

Risk factor: Dizziness and fainting



[My Snapshot](#)

What can cause this (check all that apply to you)

- Brief decrease in blood flow to the brain.
- Low blood pressure.
- Side effects from some medications.
- Not getting enough food or fluids.
- Low blood sugar.
- Getting up too quickly after sitting or lying.
- Too much exercise after eating.
- Extreme pain, fear, or stress (such as witnessing an emergency).

What you can do (choose 2-3 that you can take action on)

- If you have fainted, see your doctor. Fainting can be a sign of serious health problems.
- Sit on the side of the bed for a few minutes before you stand up.
- Follow Canada's Food Guide. Plan for 3 meals and 1 to 3 small snacks each day. Choose foods from the 4 food groups at each meal.
- Drink plenty of fluids.
- Rest after meals.
- If you have diabetes, check your blood sugar regularly. Do not go a long time between meals.
- Take medications only as directed by your doctor or pharmacist.
- Have your doctor check your blood pressure and heart rate.
- Visit a blood pressure clinic. See "Blood Pressure Clinics" on page 15.
- Have your inner ears checked.
- Wear a medical alarm that will connect you with emergency help.

Where to get information or help



Phone **211** and they will connect you to the right place.

[My Snapshot](#)

Resource Name	Contact Information
One Care Blood Pressure Clinics – Various Locations	Toll Free:1-877-502-8277 Web: www.onecaresupport.ca/services/bloodpressureclinics
SouthWesthealthline.ca: Blood Pressure Clinics	Toll Free: 1-800-811-5146 (CCAC) Web: www.southwesthealthline.ca/listServices.aspx?id=10688&region=HuronPerth
SouthWesthealthline.ca: Personal Emergency Response Systems (Medical Alert Bracelets/Necklaces)	Toll Free: 1-800-811-5146 (CCAC) Web: www.southwesthealthline.ca/listServices.aspx?id=10108&region=HuronPerth
Finding Balance Ontario: Speak Up About Dizziness	Web: www.findingbalanceontario.ca/index.php/speak-up-about-dizziness.html
MedsCheck Program	Toll Free: 1-866-255-6701 Or Contact your Pharmacist
Heart and Stroke Foundation: Blood Pressure Action Plan	Web: etools.heartandstroke.ca/HeartStroke/BPAP.Net/Tracker.aspx?AspxAutoDetectCookieSupport=1 Track your blood pressure and create an action plan. Online ONLY.

Risk factor: Vision problems



[My Snapshot](#)

What can cause this (check all that apply to you)

- As you get older, your eyes:
 - Become more sensitive to light,
 - Take longer to adjust to changes in light (from light to dark or dark to light), and
 - Have trouble seeing colours and judging distances.
- Your eyesight has changed and you need a new prescription for glasses.
- Getting used to bifocals.
- Wearing dirty or scratched glasses.
- Low lighting causes eye strain.
- Disease of the eye such as cataracts, glaucoma, macular degeneration and infections.

What you can do (choose 2-3 that you can take action on)

- Have your eyes checked each year or if you experience any changes to your eyesight.
- Clean glasses regularly. Use an eyeglass cleaner and a soft cloth.
- Remove your reading glasses when walking.
- Do not look through lower part of bifocals when going up or down stairs. Bend your head to use the upper part of the glasses.
- Wear sunglasses outdoors.
- Wear glasses that cut down on glare.
- Pause to give your eyes time to adapt to changes in light.
- Use good lighting in halls, stairways, and bathrooms. Use nightlights near your bed, in the bathroom, in hallways, and where you walk in the night.
- Ensure walking spaces are free of clutter and obstacles.
- If you have diabetes, keep your blood sugars in your target range. Good blood sugar control helps to prevent vision problems related to diabetes.
- Mark doorways and the edges of steps with a contrasting colour of paint.

Where to get information and help



Phone **211** and they will connect you to the right place.

[My Snapshot](#)

Resource Name	Contact Information
College of Opticians: Optician Search	Toll Free: 1-800-990-9793 Web: www.coptont.org/PUBLICREGISTER/index.php An optician is a licensed professional trained to help you see better.
College of Optometrists: Find an Optometrist	Toll Free: 1-888-825-2554 Web: www.collegeoptom.on.ca/index.php/public/find-an-optometrist An optometrist examines patients in order to diagnose, treat, manage and prevent diseases and disorders of the eye and vision system and its related structures.
South West Community Care Access Centre	Toll Free: 1-800-811-5146 (CCAC)
Canadian Diabetes Association	Toll Free: 1-800-226-8464 Web: www.diabetes.ca
CNIB: Services for People with Vision Loss	Toll Free: 1-800-265-4127 Web: www.cnib.ca
Low Vision Clinic – Stratford	Toll Free: 1-800-265-4127
SouthWesthealthline.ca: Diabetes Education Programs	Toll Free: 1-800-811-5146 (CCAC) Web: www.southwesthealthline.ca/listServices.aspx?id=10891&region=HuronPerth

Risk factor: Indoor hazards



[My Snapshot](#)

What can cause this (check all that apply to you)

- Rushing to answer the door or phone. Rushing to the bathroom.
- Slippery tubs, floors, and walkways.
- Poor lighting when getting up at night.
- Clutter on the floor such as phone or electrical cords, shoes, or papers.
- Pets and their toys.
- The path to walk around furniture is not clear or wide enough, especially with a walker.
- Loose carpets, area rugs, or mats.
- Stairs and bathrooms without secure handrails and grab bars.
- Bending over to reach low objects.
- Stretching or standing on a ladder or chair to reach high objects.

What you can do (choose 2-3 that you can take action on)

- Use a cordless or cellular phone. Do not rush to answer the door. Try to use the toilet regularly so you won't have to rush to get there.
- Use non-slip mats in bathrooms, showers, and tubs.
- Wipe up spills promptly with a mop. Clean your floors with a cleaning product that doesn't leave them slippery.
- Fix or mark uneven floors and keep your home free of clutter.
- Use nightlights in the bathroom, near your bed, and in hallways. Use a commode at night if needed.
- Ask someone to help you move your furniture to make more room to walk. Allow enough room to safely use your walker or cane.
- Tack down all carpets and remove scatter rugs.
- Install handrails for all stairs and grab bars in the bathroom.
- Store items on easy to reach shelves or countertops. Do not stand on ladders, chairs or stools. Buy a long handle reacher.
- Watch out for pets and put away their toys.
- Have a home Occupational Therapy assessment to ensure rooms are safe.

Where to get information or help



Phone **211** and they will connect you to the right place.

[My Snapshot](#)

Resource Name	Contact Information
SouthWesthealthline.ca: Home Help and Personal Support Care	Toll Free: 1-800-811-5146 (CCAC) Web: www.southwesthealthline.ca/listServices.aspx?id=10106&region=HuronPerth
Home Safety Guide for Older Adults: A Checklist For Your Home	Web: www.findingbalanceontario.ca/index.php/home-safety.html
SouthWesthealthline.ca: Home Modification	Toll Free: 1-800-811-5146 (CCAC) Web: www.southwesthealthline.ca/listServices.aspx?id=10116&region=HuronPerth
Finding Balance Ontario: Watch Your Step	Web: www.findingbalanceontario.ca/index.php/watch-your-step.html
Healthy Homes Renovation Tax Credit	Toll Free: 1-866-668-8297; TTY: 1-800-263-7776 Web: www.ontario.ca/taxes-and-benefits/healthy-homes-renovation-tax-credit
Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation: Safety Renovation Grants	Toll Free: 1-800-668-2642 Web: www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/co/acho/masein/index.cfm
Ontario March of Dimes: Home and Vehicle Modification Program	Toll Free: 1-877-369-4867; TTY: 519-642-3700 Web: www.marchofdimes.ca/EN/programs/hvmp/Pages/HomeandVehicle.aspx
Veterans Affairs:	Toll Free: 1-866-522-2122 The Veterans Independence Program (VIP) helps Veterans and their caregivers remain independent at home.

Risk factor: Outdoor hazards



[My Snapshot](#)

What can cause this (check all that apply to you)

- Walking in unfamiliar places.
- Wet leaves, fallen branches, snow, ice, or water puddles on walkways around your home, sidewalks, or the street.
- Improper footwear for the type of weather.
- Poor outdoor lighting.
- Uneven sidewalks, driveways, trails, and roads.
- Unmarked curbs or speed bumps.
- Being unexpectedly knocked or bumped in crowded areas such as malls, parks, and events.

What you can do (choose 2-3 that you can take action on)

- Walk slowly and pay attention.
- Avoid walking on wet leaves, snow, or ice if possible. If it is necessary, walk slowly and carefully.
- Wear footwear that is appropriate for the weather.
- Use a walker or cane as recommended by a health care provider. Carrying a cane or using a walker can alert others that you need a little more space.
- Walk with your body centred over your feet (not leaning or bent over). Avoid reaching or twisting when walking or standing.
- Use a waist belt pack or backpack instead of carrying a purse.
- If you own a car, push the grocery cart to it instead of carrying the heavy bags.
- Install automatic or timed lighting outside.
- Report safety concerns on public property to your local Public Works Department.
- Be aware of other people in crowded places. If possible, avoid situations where you may be bumped.
- Sweep dried leaves off of paths and decks before they become wet and slippery.

Where to get information or help



Phone **211** and they will connect you to the right place.

[My Snapshot](#)

Resource Name	Contact Information
SouthWesthealthline.ca: Home Maintenance and Repair	Toll Free: 1-800-811-5146 (CCAC) Web: www.southwesthealthline.ca/listServices.aspx?id=10905&region=HuronPerth
Ontario March of Dimes: Home and Vehicle Modification Program	Toll Free: 1-877-369-4867; TTY: 519-642-3700 Web: www.marchofdimes.ca/EN/programs/hvmp/Pages/HomeandVehicle.aspx
Veterans Affairs:	Toll Free: 1-866-522-2122 The Veterans Independence Program (VIP) helps Veterans and their caregivers remain independent at home.
Local Public Works Department	Report safety concerns for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Property maintenance • Street and sidewalk maintenance • Street light maintenance When you call, report: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location of the hazard • Description of the hazard • If you have fallen because of the hazard

Risk factor: Problems with bladder control



[My Snapshot](#)

What can cause this (check all that apply to you)

- As you get older your bladder holds less urine.
- Bladder infections.
- Weak muscles that cause leaking when you sneeze or cough.
- Medical conditions such as diabetes, stroke, dementia, and specifically prostate conditions for men.

What you can do (choose 2-3 that you can take action on)

- Speak with your family doctor or a health care provider.
- Go to the bathroom before your bladder is full.
- Wear clothing that is easy to manage in the bathroom such as Velcro instead of buttons or zippers, or an elastic waistband instead of a belt.
- Wear cotton underwear.
- To prevent bladder infections, wipe your bottom from front to back after using the toilet. Use a clean piece of toilet paper for each wipe to prevent germs from the rectum getting into your bladder. For other tips, speak to your health care provider.
- Take showers instead of baths.
- To strengthen muscles, do kegel exercises regularly.
- Use products to manage bladder leaks and accidents. For example, absorbent pads, pants, and sheets; condom catheters; and urinals. You can buy them at your drugstore or a medical supply store.
- Talk to a physiotherapist about bladder re-training. You may need a doctor's referral for physiotherapy.
- Avoid caffeine in drinks such as coffee, tea, or colas and foods with chocolate. Caffeine makes you pass urine more often.
- Avoid drinking alcohol.
- It is important to continue drinking fluids to avoid dehydration. Just limit the amount of fluid you drink closer to bed time.
- Keep blood sugars under good control. High blood sugars can increase the risk of bladder infection.

Where to get information or help



Phone **211** and they will connect you to the right place.

[My Snapshot](#)

Resource Name	Contact Information
Canada Revenue Agency (CRA): Continence Products	<p>Continence products are a valid expense under CRA's Medical Expense and Disability Tax Credits and Attendant Care Expense Deduction.</p> <p>Keep receipts for income tax purposes for diapers, disposable briefs, catheters, catheter trays, tubing or other products required because of incontinence caused by illness, injury or affliction.</p>
SouthWesthealthline.ca: Incontinence	<p>Toll Free: 1-800-811-5146 (CCAC)</p> <p>Web: www.southwesthealthline.ca/listServices.aspx?id=10399&region=HuronPerth</p>
Canadian Continence Foundation	<p>Toll Free: 1-800-265-9575</p> <p>Web: www.canadiancontinence.ca/EN/index.php</p>
South West Community Care Access Centre: Continence Assessment	<p>Toll Free: 1-800-811-5146 (CCAC)</p>
SouthWesthealthline.ca: Physiotherapy Services – Publicly Funded Clinics	<p>Toll Free: 1-800-811-5146 (CCAC)</p> <p>Web: www.southwesthealthline.ca/listServices.aspx?id=11019&region=HuronPerth</p>
Eat Right Ontario (Speak to a Dietitian for FREE)	<p>Toll Free: 1-877-510-5102</p> <p>Web: www.eatrightontario.ca</p>
The Powder Room: Living With An Overactive Bladder	<p>Web: www.powderroom.ca</p>
Veterans Affairs	<p>Toll Free: 1-866-522-2122</p> <p>They may be able to help cover the cost of continence products only if you are a Veteran.</p>

Risk factor: Problems with memory and concentration



[My Snapshot](#)

What can cause this (check all that apply to you)

- As you get older, you may have some difficulties with learning and memory, but dramatic memory loss is not normal.
- Pain.
- Continually feeling rushed, stressed, or indecisive.
- Fear of falling.
- Worrying about poor memory or memory gaps.
- Poor appetite or not eating balanced meals.
- Feeling nervous, anxious, sad, lonely, or depressed.
- Grieving for a loved one.
- Illnesses, infections, and side effects of some medications.
- Medical conditions such as dementia (including Alzheimer's disease), stroke, brain injury, or tumour.
- Drinking too much alcohol.

What you can do (choose 2-3 that you can take action on)

- Talk with your family doctor about:
 - Your memory loss and whether it is normal for your age,
 - Local Memory Clinics, and
 - Recent loss of appetite, loss of interest in activities, difficulty sleeping or sleeping too much, pain, or discomfort.
- Make lists to remind yourself.
- Follow a daily routine. Put important items in the same place every time.
- Plan ahead and be organized. Keep a detailed calendar.
- Make associations to help you remember (such as using landmarks to help you find places).
- Repeat names when you meet new people.
- Keep your mind active with mental exercises such as crossword puzzles or games.
- Be physically active and stay social.

Where to get information or help



Phone 211 and they will connect you to the right place.

[My Snapshot](#)

Resource Name	Contact Information
Speak To Your Doctor or Nurse Practitioner	Add Their Phone Number Here:
Ontario Brain Injury Association	Phone: 905-641-8877 Web: www.obia.ca/
Alzheimer's Society: Information on Helping Your Memory	Huron County: 1-800-561-5012 Web: www.alzheimer.ca/en/huroncounty Perth County: 1-888-797-1882 Web: www.alzheimer.ca/en/perth
Centre for Addiction and Mental Health	Toll Free: 1-800-463-6273 Web: www.camh.net

Risk factor: Alcohol use



[My Snapshot](#)

What can cause this (check all that apply to you)

- As you get older, you are more sensitive to the effects of alcohol.
- Using alcohol to help you sleep (but alcohol disturbs normal sleeping patterns).
- Stressful situations.
- Grief and loss.
- Using alcohol to relieve aches and pains (but alcohol can worsen aches and pains).
- Feeling lonely, sad, bored, or depressed.

One standard drink is:

- 355 ml (12 ounces) of 5% beer, or
- 146 ml (5 ounces) of 12 %wine, or
- 44 ml (1.5 ounces) of 40% liquor or spirits.

What you can do (choose 2-3 that you can take action on)

- Talk to your doctor or pharmacist before drinking alcohol if you are taking any medication. Make sure your family is aware that you are on medication and should be avoiding alcohol.
- Drink alcohol in moderation. For every one drink of alcohol, have one non-alcoholic drink. If you drink alcohol, be sure to stay within the limits of the Canadian Low-Risk Alcohol Drinking Guidelines.
- The Guidelines recommend no more than two drinks a day, 10 drinks per week for women, and three drinks per day, 15 drinks per week for men.**
- Think about how much and why you are drinking. Talk with your doctor if you drink more than the Guidelines listed above, or are drinking to deal with feelings, relieve pain, or help you sleep.
- Find out whether your feelings are common so you can find healthy ways to deal with them.
- Learn how your body responds to alcohol as you get older.
- Share your feelings with someone you trust such as a family member, friend, or peer counsellor.
- Talk with a community nurse, counsellor, or doctor if you feel sad or nervous, do not feel like eating, or start losing interest in your activities.
- Talk with agencies that help people such as Alcoholics Anonymous.

Where to get information or help



Phone **211** and they will connect you to the right place.

[My Snapshot](#)

Resource Name	Contact Information
Choices for Change Counselling Centre Huron- Perth	Toll Free: 1-877-218-0077 Web: www.choicesforchange.ca/
Huron Perth Addiction & Mental Health Alliance	Toll Free: 1-888-829-7484 Web: www.hpamhalliance.ca/index.php/home
Drug and Alcohol Helpline	Toll Free: 1-800-565-8603 Web: www.drugandalcoholhelpline.ca/
SouthWesthealthline.ca: Alcohol and Drug	Toll Free: 1-800-811-5146 (CCAC) Web: www.southwesthealthline.ca/listServices.aspx?id=10095&region=HuronPerth
Centre for Addiction and Mental Health	Toll Free: 1-800-463-6273 Web: www.camh.net
Family Services Perth Huron: Counselling Services	Toll Free: 1-800-268-0903 Web: www.familyservicesperth-huron.ca/
Canadian Low Risk Drinking Guidelines	Web: www.ccsa.ca/Eng/topics/alcohol/drinking-guidelines/Pages/default.aspx

Risk factor: Foot problems



[My Snapshot](#)

What can cause this (check all that apply to you)

- Poorly fitting shoes, boots, slip-ons, or floppy slippers.
- Slippery soles or soles that are sticky and catch on surfaces.
- Shoes with a high and/or narrow heel.
- Untreated calluses, bunions, or deformities.
- Untrimmed or ingrown toenails.
- Numbness or tingling in your feet.
- Pain.
- Medical conditions such as diabetes.

What you can do (choose 2-3 that you can take action on)

- Wear shoes that fit well, support your feet, and have a low, broad heel.
- Buy shoes made for older adults with:
 - A variety of sizes,
 - Leather lining to allow stretching, and
 - Extra depth.
- Choose shoes with laces or Velcro closures rather than slip-ons.
- Make sure your footwear is in good repair.
- Buy slippers that offer support, fit properly, and have enclosed heels.
- Use a long handled shoe horn and/or elastic laces to help you get your shoes on.
- If your feet are swollen, raise them up on a pillow when sitting or lying down. Your feet should be higher than your hips.
- Check your feet daily with a mirror for cracks and sores. Keep feet clean.
- Wear loose socks. Socks that are too tight can cut off blood flow to your feet.
- Ask your doctor about wearing support socks or stockings.
- Visit a foot care or chiropody clinic. A foot care specialist can do foot care, help you learn to care for your feet, and help you choose the right shoes.

Where to get information or help



Phone **211** and they will connect you to the right place.

[My Snapshot](#)

Resource Name	Contact Information
SouthWesthealthline.ca: Prosthetics and Orthotics	Toll Free: 1-800-811-5146 (CCAC) Web: www.southwesthealthline.ca/listServices.aspx?id=11020&region=HuronPerth
SouthWesthealthline.ca: Foot Care & Foot Clinics	Toll Free: 1-800-811-5146 (CCAC) Web: www.southwesthealthline.ca/listServices.aspx?id=10105&region=HuronPerth
SouthWesthealthline.ca: Chiropody Clinics	Toll Free: 1-800-811-5146 (CCAC) Web: www.southwesthealthline.ca/listServices.aspx?id=10616&region=HuronPerth
Finding Balance: Watch Your Step	Web: www.findingbalanceontario.ca/index.php/watch-your-step.html
College of Chiropodists of Ontario: Find a Chiropodist or Podiatrist	Toll Free: 1-877-232-7653 Web: www.cocoo.on.ca/m1.htm
SouthWesthealthline.ca: Diabetes Education Programs	Toll Free: 1-800-811-5146 (CCAC) Web: www.southwesthealthline.ca/listServices.aspx?id=10891

Risk factor: Poor bone health



[My Snapshot](#)

What can cause this (check all that apply to you)

- Bones naturally become less dense and weaker with age.
- Your bones may have become thin, weak and more likely to break, due to a condition called osteoporosis.
- Factors that contribute to bone loss, including:
 - Not enough weight-bearing exercise,
 - Poor nutrition, not getting enough calcium or Vitamin D,
 - Low body weight,
 - Too much salt in your diet,
 - Smoking,
 - Having 3 or more alcoholic drinks a day,
 - Early menopause or low estrogen in women, and
 - Some medications like prednisone or hormone treatments.

What you can do (choose 2-3 that you can take action on)

- Stop smoking or reduce how much you smoke.
- Plan for 3 meals and 1 to 3 small snacks daily.
- Choose foods from the 4 food groups each meal.
- Choose food and drinks with calcium more often. If you can have dairy products in your diet, have 3 servings a day. Foods that have calcium include spinach, collard greens, beans, salmon, and sardines.
- Refrain from drinking alcohol.
- You may not get all the calcium and vitamin D you need from foods. Talk with your doctor to see if supplements are right for you.
- Get active! Make a plan to gradually increase your physical activity. For healthy, strong bones do weight bearing exercise (such as walking, dancing), stretching, and exercises for strength, posture and balance. Look for the Too Fit to Fracture exercise program in your community.
- Talk to your doctor about wearing hip protectors to ease the impact on the hip if a fall does occur.

One serving of dairy products is equal to:

- 1 cup of milk, or
- 3/4 cup of yogurt, or
- 2 ounces of cheese.

Where to get information or help



Phone 211 and they will connect you to the right place.

[My Snapshot](#)

Resource Name	Contact Information
Speak To Your Doctor or Nurse Practitioner	Add Their Phone Number Here:
Osteoporosis Canada	Toll Free: 1-800-463-6842 ext 414 Web: www.osteoporosis.ca
South West Self-Management Program: Learn Tools to Live a Healthy Life	Toll Free: 1-855-463-5692 Web: www.swselfmanagement.ca/index.aspx
Eat Right Ontario (Speak to a Dietitian for FREE)	Toll Free: 1-877-510-5102 Web: www.eatrightontario.ca
SouthWesthealthline.ca: Meals on Wheels Delivery Services	Toll Free: 1-800-811-5146 (CCAC) Web: www.southwesthealthline.ca/listServices.aspx?id=10107&region=HuronPerth
SouthWesthealthline.ca: Bone Disease	Toll Free: 1-800-811-5146 (CCAC) Web: www.southwesthealthline.ca/listServices.aspx?id=10157&region=HuronPerth
SouthWesthealthline.ca: Diagnostic Imaging Clinics (Bone Mineral Density testing by referral)	Toll Free: 1-800-811-5146 (CCAC) Web: www.southwesthealthline.ca/listServices.aspx?id=10629&region=HuronPerth
Huron and Perth Health Units: Can Offer Supports to Quit Smoking	Huron County: 1-877-837-6143 Perth County: 1-877-271-7348 ext 267
Smokers' Helpline	Toll Free: 1-877-513-5333 Web: www.smokershelpline.ca/

Risk factor: Hearing problems



[My Snapshot](#)

What can cause this (check all that apply to you)

- Wax build-up in your ears.
- Hearing aids that are dirty or have low batteries.
- Inner ear problems.
- Not paying attention.
- Too much noise.

What you can do (choose 2-3 that you can take action on)

- Have your hearing checked regularly by an audiologist. You do not need a referral from your doctor.
- Buy a hearing aid if needed. When you have your hearing aid fitted, you will be shown how to use and clean it. Clean your hearing aid often and check the batteries regularly.
- Have your doctor or health care provider check your ears for wax. Your ear canal and ear drum are delicate. DO NOT clean your ears with cotton-tipped swabs (Q-tips) or hair pins (bobby pins).
- In public places, sit in a quiet area if possible.
- Reduce the number of sounds. For example, turn the TV down when you talk on the phone.
- Ask people to speak clearly and slowly. If you didn't hear something, ask them to repeat it.

Where to get information or help



[My Snapshot](#)

Resource Name	Contact Information
SouthWesthealthline.ca: Hearing Aids and Communication Devices	Toll Free: 1-800-811-5146 (CCAC) Web: www.southwesthealthline.ca/listServices.aspx?id=10286&region=HuronPerth
SouthWesthealthline.ca: Deafness and Impaired Hearing	Toll Free: 1-800-811-5146 (CCAC) Web: www.southwesthealthline.ca/listServices.aspx?id=10620&region=HuronPerth
Bell Canada Specialized Phone Service	Toll Free: 1-800-268-9243; TTY: 1-800-268-9242 Web: www.bell.ca/Accessibility_services
Veterans Affairs	Toll Free: 1-866-522-2122 They may be able to help cover the cost of hearing products.
Canadian Hearing Society	Toll Free: 1-877-347-3427 Web: www.chs.ca/



My plan to prevent falls! A sample worksheet



[My Snapshot](#)

Setting goals can help you be successful in making changes in your life. Think about your risk factors and the changes that could prevent a fall. You can set one goal, or one for each risk factor. Keep your worksheet handy and use it to stay on track with your goals. Here is an example of how it works.

1. Ask yourself these questions:

What am I going to do?	<i>Walk</i>
How much am I going to do?	<i>Around the block</i>
When am I going to do it?	<i>Before lunch</i>
How many days a week will I do it?	<i>Three days</i>

2. Write out your goal:

This week I will:

Walk around the block before lunch on Monday, Wednesday, and Saturday.

3. Rate your confidence: Circle the number that matches how confident you feel

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
I'm not ready.			I think I can.				I can do this!		

It is important to choose a goal that you can reach. If your confidence rating is less than 7 you may not be successful. Change your goal to one you feel very confident about. It's OK to start with something small.

4. Track your progress:

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>I did it!</i>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>I did it!</i>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>I did it!</i>	
Comments	Comments	Comments	Comments	Comments	Comments	Comments

When you reach one goal, set another. A series of small steps can help you make big changes towards preventing falls.

My plan to prevent falls!

Your worksheet



[My Snapshot](#)

1. Answer these questions:

What am I going to do? _____

How much am I going to do? _____

When am I going to do it? _____

How many days a week will I do it? _____

2. Write out your goal:

This week I will:
--

3. Rate your confidence: Circle the number that matches how confident you feel

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
I'm not ready.			I think I can.				I can do this!		

If your rating is less than 7, adjust the goal so that you feel more confident.

4. Track your progress:

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comments	Comments	Comments	Comments	Comments	Comments	Comments

If you reached your goal, set another!

You can prevent falls! Helpful tips for all older adults

Take these steps to prevent falls		
1	Check Your Medications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask your pharmacist to review your medications at least once a year.
2	Keep Active	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exercise for a total of 150 minutes (2½ hours) each week.
3	Watch Your Step	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wear supportive shoes and be careful when you walk.
4	Speak Up About Dizziness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell your doctor if you feel dizzy or light-headed.

Tips for speaking to health care providers	
✓	Write down your questions and concerns ahead of time, in order of importance. This activity will help you remember.
✓	Bring someone with you to appointments. Ask them to take notes so you can listen and ask questions.
✓	Ask for resources such as brochures or posters that you can take home to learn more.
✓	If you think you will not have enough time to ask all your questions, ask to book extra appointment time.

For more information		
Huron County Health Unit 1-877-837-6143 ext. 2021 www.huronhealthunit.ca	Perth District Health Unit 1-877-271-7348 ext. 267 www.pdhu.on.ca	
Finding Balance findingbalanceontario.ca	Call 211 211ontario.ca	SouthWesthealthline.ca southwesthealthline.ca

About this guide

“Staying on Your Feet” was developed by The Grey Bruce Falls Prevention and Intervention Program, The Grey Bruce Health Unit, and The South West LHIN Falls Prevention Collaborative.

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Finding
Balance



SouthWesthealthline.ca