

Fall Prevention Checklist

Fall Prevention Checklist

Ask a loved one or a support person to help you work through this list. Check off all the ways you can make your home safer and help prevent falls.

Talk to an occupational therapist (OT) or a physiotherapist (PT) to find out if a walking aid (like a cane or a walker) is right for you. If you use a cane or a walker, ask your OT or PT to go over the safety features and set the right height for you.

In your home

- Make sure all areas of your home are well lit.
- Have a lamp or a light switch near your bed that you can reach easily without getting up. A 'touch lamp' is a great idea.
- Have nightlights in your hallways, bedrooms, and bathrooms.
- Keep pathways to all of your rooms free of clutter. **This is very important if you use a cane or a walker.**
- Remove small rugs and mats that are not attached to the floor.
- Keep all electrical wires and phone cords secured safely out of pathways.

Stairs

- Put handrails on both sides of your stairs. Make sure you are able to hold the handrails all the way down the stairs.
- **To climb stairs:**
 - › Hold each handrail with one hand.
 - › Step up onto the first stair with one leg.
 - › Straighten your other leg. Bring your first leg up so that both feet are on the same stair. Use the handrail for support.
 - › Repeat these steps for each stair.
- **To walk down stairs:**
 - › Hold each handrail with one hand.
 - › Step down onto the first stair with one leg.
 - › Then, step down onto the same stair with your other leg. Use the handrail for support.
 - › Repeat these steps for each stair.
- Ask or hire someone to fix loose or uneven steps and handrails.
- Always keep stairs free of clutter.
- Make sure there is a light switch at the top and bottom of stairs.
- Doors at the top of stairs should open away from the stairs.

- Attach carpet firmly to the stairs. Put non-slip rubber treads on the stairs if there is no carpet.

Outside

- Ask or hire someone to paint your outside stairs with a mixture of sand and paint for better grip.
- Ask or hire someone to clear snow, ice, newspapers, and leaves from your walkways and outside steps.
- Always keep a light on at your outdoor entrances and stairs.

Kitchen

- Keep things you use most often on lower shelves or on the counter so you can reach them.
- Use a long-handled reacher to reach lighter items that are stored higher than you can reach easily.
- Do not** climb to reach things.
- Plan your meals ahead of time. Try a meal delivery program (like Meals on Wheels) or buy meals that are easy to make. Find a Meals on Wheels Program near you:
 - > <https://mowns.ca/>
- If you use a walker, use a tray attachment to make it easier and safer to carry things around your kitchen.

Bathroom

- Talk to your OT or PT about safety equipment for the bathroom (like grab bars, raised toilet seats, bath benches, or seats).
- Have a non-slip rubber mat or non-slip adhesive (sticky) strips put in your tub. **Do not** use rubber mats with suction cups.
- If you have trouble getting in or out of your tub, ask for help. Have a sponge bath if there is no one to help you.

Clothing

- Wear non-slip, low-heeled shoes with enclosed heels, or slippers that fit well and have a supportive sole. **Do not** walk around in socks. They can be slippery and you may fall.
- Wear clothes that will not catch on furniture.
- Do not** wear dresses or pants that are too long. They can make it hard to walk or move.

Tips to prevent falls

- Use assistive devices and safety equipment as told by your OT or PT.
- Have your eyes and ears tested each year.
- Review all of your medications with your primary health care provider (family doctor or nurse practitioner) or pharmacist each year.
- Exercise often to keep up your muscle strength, balance, and coordination.
- Eat healthy. Limit how much or how often you drink alcohol.
- Get up slowly after lying or sitting down. If you feel dizzy, wait before you stand up.
- **Do not** carry heavy or large things. This can affect your balance.
- Keep your phone or cell phone in reach. Having a cordless phone beside your bed is a good idea.
- Keep emergency numbers in large print next to each phone.
- Ask a loved one to check in on you often. If this is not possible, think about using a medical alert system.

For more information about fall prevention, please ask your OT or PT.

This pamphlet is for educational purposes only. It is not intended to replace the advice or professional judgment of a health care provider. The information may not apply to all situations. If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

Find this pamphlet and all our patient resources here:
<https://library.nshealth.ca/Patients-Guides>

Connect with a registered nurse in Nova Scotia any time:
Call 811 or visit: <https://811.novascotia.ca>

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