

Fall Prevention Checklist

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Ask a family member or friend 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 mobility aid (like a cane or a walker) would be 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 light switch near your bed that you can reach easily without getting up. A 'touch lamp' is a great idea.
- Have night lights in your hallways, bedrooms, and bathrooms.
- Keep pathways to all of your rooms clutter free. 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

- Install 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, and bring your first leg up so that both feet are on the same stair. Use the handrail for support.
 - › Do this 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.
- Hire someone or ask a family member to fix loose or uneven steps and handrails.
- Always keep stairs clutter free.

- Make sure there is a light switch at the top and bottom of the stairs.
- Doors at the top of the 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

- Hire someone or ask a family member to paint your outside steps 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 in reach by keeping them on lower shelves or on the counter.
- Use a long-handled reacher to reach lighter items stored higher than you can easily reach.
- Do not climb to reach things.**
- Plan your meals ahead of time. Think about using a meal delivery program (like Meals on Wheels) or buy meals that are easy to make.
- If you use a walker, a tray attachment makes 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 (do not use the kind with suction cups) or non-slip adhesive (sticky) strips put in your tub.
- If you have a hard time 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, enclosed heels, or slippers that fit well and have a good sole. **Do not walk around in socks because they can be slippery.**
- Wear clothes that will not catch on furniture.
- Dresses or pants that are too long can make it hard to walk or move.

Tips to prevent falls

- Use assistive devices and safety equipment as directed by your OT or PT.
- Have your eyesight and hearing tested regularly.
- Review all of your medications with your health care provider and/or pharmacist regularly.
- Exercise regularly to improve your muscle strength, balance, and coordination.
- Eat well-balanced meals and limit how much and/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, large, or awkward things that can throw you off balance.**
- Keep your phone or cell phone in reach. A cordless phone beside your bed is a good idea.
- Keep emergency numbers in large print next to each phone.
- Think about using a medical alert system or ask a friend or family member to check in on you regularly.

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

Looking for more health information?

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

Contact your local public library for books, videos, magazines, and other resources.

For more information, go to <http://library.novascotia.ca>

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

Learn about other programs and services in your community: call 211 or visit <http://ns.211.ca>

Nova Scotia Health promotes a smoke-free, vape-free, and scent-free environment.

Please do not use perfumed products. Thank you!

www.nshealth.ca

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The information is not intended to be and does not constitute health care or medical advice.

If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.