

Preventing Falls and Injuries in Long-term Care

- If you have a mobility aid (like a cane or a walker), make sure you use it at all times. **Ask for help if you cannot reach your mobility aid.**
- Get up slowly after lying or sitting down. If you feel dizzy, wait before you stand up.
- **Wear hip protectors, if needed:**
 - › Falls are the most common cause of hip fractures among frail and older adults.
 - › Hip protectors may help prevent hip fractures, depending on your risk. Ask staff where to find hip protectors, if needed.

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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Your health and safety is important to us.

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When do falls happen?

- Most falls happen because of a lack of mobility (not moving enough).
- This makes it easier for you to fall:
 - › During transfers (like from sitting to standing or getting on or off the toilet)
 - › While moving from one place to another (like from a bed to a wheelchair)

Am I at risk of falling?

You may have a higher risk of falling if you:

- › Have an acute (comes on fast and does not last long) illness (like strep throat, an infection, or the flu)
- › Have a health condition like Parkinson's disease, depression, arthritis, stroke, dementia, diabetes
- › Have less balance or strength
- › Are weak
- › Take medications that may make you sleepy or confused, or cause a drop in your blood pressure or blood sugar
- › Have problems seeing

- › Are confused
- › Wear shoes or slippers that do not fit well
- › Have had falls in the past
- › Are 80 years old or older
- › Often need to get to the bathroom quickly
- › Have cluttered spaces or pathways

What can I do to lower my risk of falling?

- Exercise to build your balance, strength, and flexibility.
- **Go over your medications with your pharmacist once a year.**
- **Get your vision and hearing checked once a year.**
- Wear your glasses and hearing aids, if needed. Make sure they are working properly and update them, if needed.
- Include your loved ones in your care plan.
- Remove things that you may trip on, like rugs and phone cords.
- Wear non-slip, low-heeled shoes with enclosed heels, or slippers that fit well and have a good sole. **Do not walk in socks because they can be slippery.**