



Patient Handout: Facts About Falls

FALSE: Falls are normal. If you fall and don't get hurt, you don't need to tell anyone.

TRUE: Do not be embarrassed about falling. Tell your caregiver if you have fallen so that you can learn about how to prevent another fall. It's important to remember that falls are *not* a normal part of getting older; falls are preventable, and *anyone* can greatly reduce their risk of falls. If you fall, even if you don't get hurt, make an appointment to discuss with your doctor. Falls are preventable, even as you get older. One in three British Columbians over the age of 65 fall each year. Most falls result in minor injuries, such as bruises, but about 10% to 15% result in serious injuries, such as broken bones.

FALSE: Most falls happen outside, because of hazards like uneven sidewalks or icy steps.

TRUE: Most falls happen inside the home, not outside. Injuries from falls occur not because we tripped over something (such as pets underfoot, or kids leaving toys around) – but because seniors often lack the leg strength to stop falling after they are tripped by something.

FALSE: Reducing your fall risk takes a lot of time and money.

TRUE: There are simple steps anyone can take to reduce their fall risk that are free or cost very little!

- **Exercise:** The best way for anyone to reduce their risk of falling is to increase their strength and balance through exercise. Anyone can call HealthLinkBC at 8-1-1 to talk to a qualified exercise professional for free. They can walk you through a physical activity readiness questionnaire and provide physical activity information and guidance as well as advice on classes in the community, many of which are offered at low cost. For no cost exercises, there are online videos on [FindingBalanceBC.ca](https://www.findingbalancebc.ca) that seniors can use to follow along at home. Ensure that you choose a safe level of exercise to start from. Anyone, can increase their strength and balance by exercising.
- **Vision Assessments:** Medical Services Plan (MSP) covers routine eye examinations for those 65 years of age and older. As vision can change quickly as we get older, it's important to make sure prescriptions are up to date.
- **Medication Reviews:** Some medications can interact with others to cause dizziness and seniors may be on a higher dose of medications than they need. You can review your medications with your doctor or a pharmacist in person, or a pharmacist over the phone at HealthLinkBC at 8-1-1.
- **Home Hazard Assessment and Modifications:** It's important to remove all objects that can cause hazards on hallways and floors in the home, such as: throw rugs, cords, and piles of clutter. It can also be helpful to install supports, such as grab bars. The BC Housing [Home Adaptations For Independence](https://www.bchousing.org/housing-assistance/HAFI) program (<https://www.bchousing.org/housing-assistance/HAFI>) provides grants for low income seniors. Improper footwear such as slippers can be a fall hazard.
- **Plan ahead:** Let people know your plans and take a cell phone or whistle with you or wear an alert system when you leave your house.

There are many devices such as, canes, walkers, grab bars, and shoes where proper fitting should be reviewed with a health professional. In many cases prescribed equipment may be covered by third party insurance.

Call HealthLinkBC at 8-1-1