# **INDEPENDENCE**

WHY RISK IT?

### YOUR GUIDE TO LIVING INDEPENDENTLY AT HOME

#### ARE YOU AT RISK?

- $\square$  (2) I have fallen in the last six months.
- ☐ (2) I use or have been advised to use a cane or walker.
- ☐ (1) Sometimes, I feel unsteady when I am walking.
- ☐ (1) I steady myself by holding onto furniture when walking at home.
- ☐ (1) I am worried about falling.
- ☐ (1) I need to push with my hands to stand up from a chair.
- ☐ (1) I have some trouble stepping up onto a curb.
- ☐ (1) I often have to rush to the toilet.
- ☐ (1) I have lost some feeling in my feet.
- ☐ (1) I take medicine that sometime makes me feel light-headed or more tired than usual.
- (1) I take medicine to help me sleep or improve my mood.
- ☐ (1)! often feel sad or depressed.

# Total Points: \_\_\_\_\_

Add up the number of points in parentheses for each statement that applies to you. If you scored **4 points or more**, you may be **at risk** for falling.

For more information, please visit: www.seniorsbc.ca/stayingindependent



STAYING INDEPENDENT

#### **DID YOU KNOW?**

- One-third of seniors suffer one or more falls every year.
- Falls are the most common cause of injury and the 6<sup>th</sup> leading cause of death for seniors.
- Almost half of admissions to long-term care facilities are fall-related.
- Haif of the people who have a hip fracture never regain their pre-fall level of functioning.
- Most falls occur at home during usual daily activities.
- 40% of falls of falls that require hospitalization involve hip fractures.
- Women are 3 times more likely than men to be hospitalized for a fall.

### WHAT YOU CAN DO TO PREVENT FALLS

## 1) Begin a regular exercise program

- Do exercises that improve balance and coordination such as Tai Chi or Get Up & Go!
- Exercise will make you stronger and help you feel better
- · Lack of exercise leads to weakness

# 2) Have your health care provider review your medicines

- As you get older, the way medicines work in your body can change
- Some medicines, or combinations of medicines, can make you sleepy or dizzy and can cause you to fall

### 3) Have your vision checked

- Have your eyes checked at least once a year
- You may be wearing the wrong glasses or have a condition like glaucoma or cataracts that limits your vision

### 4) Make your home safer

- Remove small throw rugs or use double sided tape to keep rugs from slipping
- Keep items you use often in cabinets you can reach easily without using a step stool
- Wear shoes both inside and outside the house. Avoid going barefoot, in socks, or wearing slippers.
- Improve the lightning in your home

Try the Home Safety Checklist on the next page!

"Being physically active is one of the most important ways to lower your chances of falling!"



TRY TAI CHI



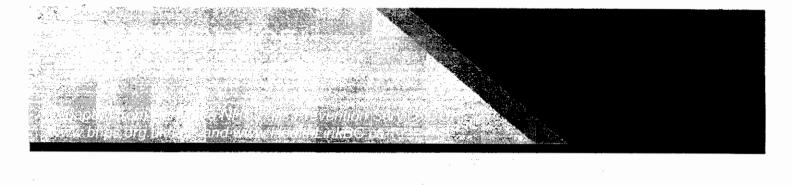
REVIEW YOUR MEDS

# INDEPENDENCE, NO PLACELIKE HOWE

reach.

# COMPLETE THIS HOME SAFETY CHECKLIST TO ENSURE THAT YOUR HOME IS FREE OF FALLS!

STAIRS AND STEPS		BE	BEDROOM	
	Have light switches at the top and bottom of the stairs. Make sure the stairs are well lit.		Have a light within reach of your bed. Consider a flash light or a lamp with a "clapon" adaptor.	
	Ensure that your stairs are in good repair with a non-skid surface and free of clutter.		Beds should be at a good height for easy	
	Mark the edges of the steps with contrasting coloured non-skid tape or paint.		movement on and off. Firmer mattresses will make getting in and out easier.	
	Ensure that there are sturdy handrails on at least one side of all stairways.  Remove your reading glasses when you go up and down the stairs.		Have a cordless phone by your bed.	
П			Make sure there is a clear path from your bed to the bathroom.	
			Ensure your bedspread is clear of the floor and is not a tripping hazard.	
	Never rush up or down the stairs.		Have your walking aid handy and within	
KITCHEN			easy reach of the bed in case you have to get up in the night.	
	Place frequently used items in easy-to- reach locations. Heavier items should be stored in lower cupboards.		Sit on the edge of your bed for a minute before getting up after a rest.	
	Use a broad based, sturdy and secure	BA	BATHROOM	
	stepladder if it is absolutely necessary to reach high places.		Use slip-resistant mats around the shower	
□	Avoid use of floor wax, or use the non-skid kind.		and bath. Paint-on or self-adhesive slip- resistant strips are advisable in the shower and bath.	
	Always wipe up any spills immediately to avoid slipping.		Soap, shampoo, and towels should be placed within easy reach so that you don't	
LIVING AREAS			have to bend or reach for them.	
	Make sure all walking areas are clear of		Have grab bars installed around the bath, shower, and toilet.	
_	telephone or other electrical cords.		If you have trouble getting on and off the	
	Position your furniture accordingly to keep pathways clear to and from areas that you		toilet seat, consider using an elevated toilet seat adaptor.	
П	need access to.  Have a cordless telephone within easy		Consider using a bath seat so you can take a shower or bath sitting down.	
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1. It is important to **remain calm** after the fall. Lie still for a few minutes and assess the situation. Only try to get up if you believe you can do so **safely**.

2. Start by **slowly** pushing yourself up onto your elbows. Lift your head and **remain still** for a moment to let your blood pressure adjust.





**3. Slowly** get up onto your hands and knees. **Look** around for a **stable** piece of furniture such as a chair and move towards it.

**4.** Place your hands on a **steady** surface of the chair and **rest**. Move **one foot** forward and place it flat on the floor. One knee should still be on the ground.





**5.** With the chair as support, **slowly** rise into a standing position. Keep your hands on the chair and take **rest** to allow your blood pressure to adjust.

**6. Turn** your body and **gently** lower yourself into the seat. Stay seated for a few minutes and assess how you feel. **Call for help** if you need it. Let someone know what happened even if you feel okay. You may not be aware of any **injuries**.



Fraser Health: ~Older Adult Program~ Falls Prevention : Phone: (604)-587-7866 | Email: fallsprevention@fraserhealth.ca