
Falls and Fall Prevention

Falls are a serious matter for older adults. They can cause significant injury and even death. Considering that one in three adults will experience a serious fall in their lifetime, it is not surprising that falls are the leading cause of hospitalization among Canadians aged 65 and over. By using the information on this sheet, you can help to make your home safer and find healthcare professionals who specialize in falls and fall prevention, helping you to decrease your risk for falling.

Things You Can Do to Prevent Falls

Many people think that falls are a part of old age and there is little they can do to prevent them. This couldn't be further from the truth. In fact, there are many things that you can do to prevent falls in your home including:

Wear proper footwear: Your shoes should be well fitting with flat, non-slip soles.

Avoid using multi-focal glasses while walking.

Install and use nightlights in the bedroom, hallway, and bathroom.

Remove throw rugs or secure their edges to the floor.

Arrange furniture so there is a clear path to all well traveled areas of your home.

Use hip protectors to decrease the chance of hip fractures from a fall.

Have yearly check-ups with a healthcare worker who can assess any physical or mental issues that could contribute to a fall.

Engage in exercise that promotes balance and strength such as yoga or tai chi.

Install a non-slip rubber mat in the bathtub or shower.

Keep your stairways and floors free of clutter and things such as electrical cords or telephone wires.

Use a cordless phone.

Maintain good health by eating regular, well-balanced meals.

Take medications properly and be aware of their side effects.

Have your vision and hearing checked regularly and wear glasses or hearing aids as required.

Have grab bars and railings installed appropriately. Avoid using towel racks, soap dishes and other handholds that are not meant to support body weight.



Occupational Therapy

Skills for the job of living.

How an Occupational Therapist Can Help You Prevent Falls

Occupational therapists are part of the healthcare team in Alberta that provides care to older adults. They are uniquely skilled to assess a person's interaction with their environment and how this interaction may lead to falls or other injuries. Studies have shown that a home assessment by an occupational therapist can significantly reduce your chances of falling. Occupational therapists can help you to prevent falls in your home by:

- Performing physical, mental, and environmental assessments to determine your risk for falling
- Educating you to increase your awareness and knowledge of fall risk factors
- Providing recommendations for home renovations that decrease your risk of falls (i.e. grab bar and hand rail placement, furniture arrangement, alternatives to stairs)
- Assisting you in finding home renovation resources that offer financial and/or manual assistance for home modifications
- Recommending mobility aids such as canes, walkers, wheelchairs, and scooters
- Assisting you to get government funding for mobility aids. (Note: you must be

found eligible for the Alberta Aids to Daily Living Fund to receive government assistance)

How to Contact an Occupational Therapist

To find an occupational therapist go to our website at www.saot.ca and download the Private Practice Listing. Or for an occupational therapist employed by a regional health authority, phone Health Link, or go to the Inform Alberta website (www.informalberta.ca).



Occupational therapy assists you with the Skills for the Job of Living in caring for yourself and your family, returning to work, and in resuming community activities.

For additional information on the benefits of occupational therapy and how it can assist you or someone you know, please contact:

info@saot.ca