

Your home safety checklist

Anyone can fall, but the risk of falling becomes greater with age.

Health Canada reports that every year, one in three Canadian seniors will fall at least once. Nearly half of those falls will occur in the home — most often in the bathroom or on the stairs.

Factors that can increase your risk of falling include:

- ↪ poor balance
- ↪ decreased muscle and bone strength
- ↪ reduced vision or hearing
- ↪ unsafe conditions in and around your home.

We have prepared this home safety checklist to help you think about changes you might want to make to reduce falling risks. Look for more safety tips and checklists in the next issue.

✓ Safety on the stairs

- Do not store loose items on stairs.
- Repair uneven or broken steps.
- Install a light switch at both the top and bottom of the staircase.
- Make sure carpets are securely attached and have no rips.
- Remove loose rugs or secure them with double sided, non-slip backing.
- Install solid handrails on both sides of the stairway.
- Wear shoes indoors. Slippers can increase the risk of falling.

✓ Safety in the bathroom

- Use a rubber bath mat for the tub and shower. Install the mat when the tub is dry.
- If you need to, use a bath seat in the shower.
- Install grab bars by the toilet and in the bath.
- Store items such as soap and shampoo within easy reach
- Install a raised toilet seat, if you need one.
- Consider upgrading to a walk in tub. This makes it easy to get in, and they have great safety features. There are also hydrotherapy options, such as water jets.

✓ Phone safety

- Think about getting cordless phones for the main rooms you use, so that you do not have to rush to answer the phone.
- List emergency number in large print near your phones.
- Think about getting an alert device in case you fall and are unable to get up.