

Fall Prevention & Safety Tips



Integrated Regional Falls Program

North Simcoe Muskoka LHIN



The Integrated Regional Falls Program

What is the Integrated Regional Falls Program?

The Integrated Regional Falls Program links community agencies and health care professionals from across Simcoe and Muskoka Counties to provide a falls screening, assessment and intervention program and services to seniors who have fallen or are at risk of falling.



What is a Fall Prevention and Risk Assessment Clinic?

There are three different types of falls clinics offered through this program.

1. Family Health Team (FHT) and Community Health Centre (CHC): these falls clinics focus on assessment and intervention of patients who are a risk for falling and are a patient of the FHT/CHC.
2. General Screening Clinics: These community clinics support all primary care providers in assessment and managements of seniors identified as having a fall risk.
3. Specialized Falls Assessment Clinics: These clinics are designed for challenging, complex cases where falls persist or fall risk remains at an unacceptable level despite primary care intervention.

Who is running the clinic?

Nurses and physiotherapists will do your assessment and will then collaborate with Primary Care and community partners such as; Pharmacists, CCAC, RVH Geriatric Services, VON SMART Programs and Seating and Mobility Clinics.

Who should attend a clinic?

Consider attending if you are over age 65, or age 55 with complex health issues, and are concerned about falling and you:

- had a fall in the past 12 months
- had a near fall in the past 3 months
- have a fear of falling

What can I expect from the clinic?

- screening for risk of falling including the Time Up and Go (TUG)
- medication review
- gait and mobility assessment
- home safety evaluation/education
- general falls education
- list of community resources
- a follow-up call from one of our clinic staff following your visit

What should I bring to the clinic?

- a list of your medications including any over-the-counter medication
- wear comfortable clothing and walking shoes
- bring your usual walking aid
- your health card

Fast Facts About Falls

- 1 in 3 seniors will experience a fall each year, and half of those more than once
- 40% of seniors' falls result in hip fractures
- 20% of injury-related deaths among seniors can be traced back to a fall
- Seniors are injured at home more than any other location. The bathroom and stairs are particularly dangerous

Protect Yourself

Anyone can fall, but as we age, our risk of falling becomes greater. However, many injuries due to falls can be prevented. The first step to avoid a fall is to understand what causes them. Poor balance, decreased muscle and bone strength, poor vision and hearing, and unsafe conditions in and around your home can increase your risk of falling.

Taking steps to reduce these risks will keep you safe and on your feet. Making changes in your home and lifestyle, such as, eating well and staying active can prevent falls.

1. Assess your environment using the ***“Staying Independent: A Fall Prevention Checklist”***.
2. Use your medication safely:
 - know why you are taking your medications
 - ask your doctor or pharmacist about possible side effects and adjust your activities accordingly
 - read directions carefully so you are aware of potential reactions with your other medications
 - use over-the-counter medication with caution
 - don't mix alcohol with your medications
2. Use safety aids:
 - consider using a cane or walker; make sure they are the correct height and in safe working condition
 - if you already have a safety aid(s) don't be embarrassed about using them; they keep you safe and active
 - wear your glasses and hearing aids
 - find out if there are other “gadgets” that can make your life safer such as reachers and anti-skid soles
3. Eat healthy meals:
 - nutritious meals help keep up our strength, resistance and balance
 - don't skip meals as this can lead to weakness and dizziness
4. Keep fit:
 - engage in daily physical activity
 - do resistance exercise to build muscle and bone strength
 - try Tai Chi for balance training

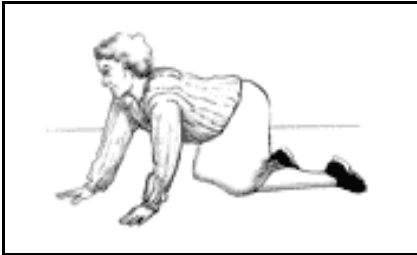
Note: Always consult your doctor before starting an exercise program.

If You Fall or Witness a Fall

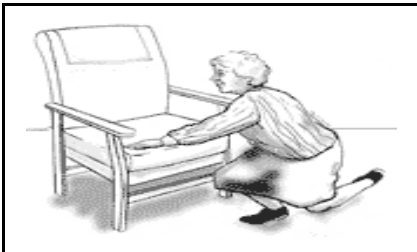
How to get up from a fall!



1. Lie on your side; bend the leg on top and lift yourself onto your elbows or hands.



2. Crawl towards a chair or other sturdy piece of furniture.



3. Placing both hands on the object, place your stronger leg in front, while holding onto the object.



4. Carefully stand up.



5. Very carefully turn around and sit down.

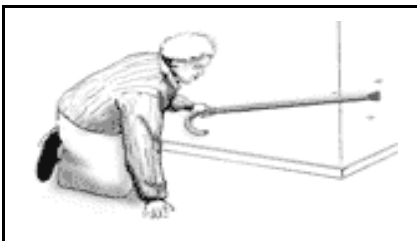
What to do if you fall and you can't get up!



1. Call for help if you think you can be heard!



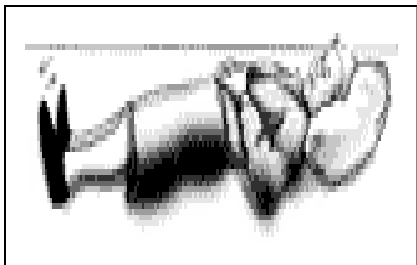
2. Try to crawl or slide yourself towards the phone or a place where you may be heard.



3. Make noise with an object such as your cane.

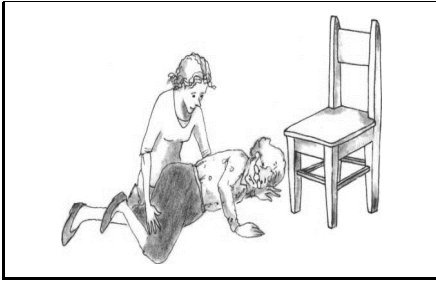


4. Wait for help in the most comfortable position for you. Use a pillow under your head and a blanket to stay warm.

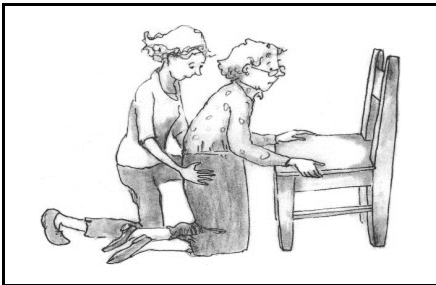


5. Try to move your joints to ease circulation and prevent stiffness.

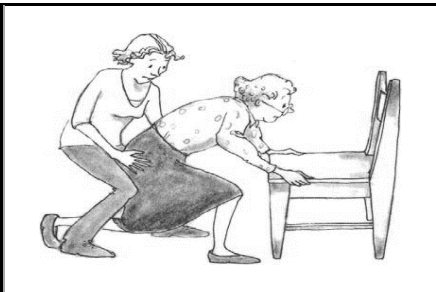
What to do if you witness someone fall!



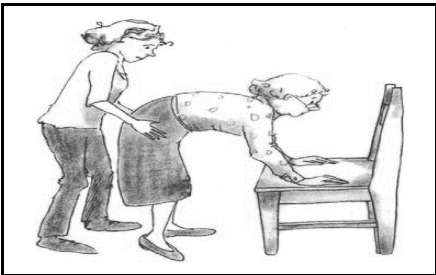
1. Bring a chair close by; help the person turn onto their side; bend upper leg; help them into a semi-seated position.



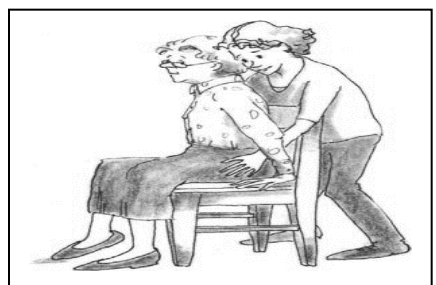
2. Place yourself behind the person, get a firm grip on their hips and help them into a kneeling position with both hands on the chair.



3. Holding onto the chair have the person place their strong leg in front.



4. With a firm grip on the person's hips, help them stand up.



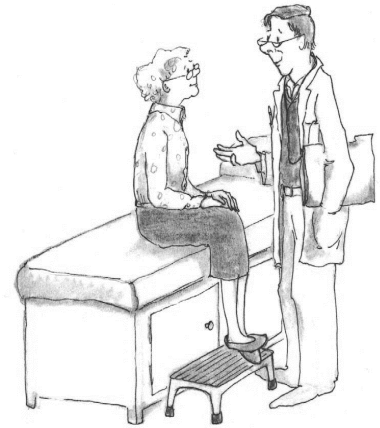
5. Carefully help them turn and sit on chair.

When to See a Doctor

Never underestimate the seriousness of a fall.
Even if it appears no harm was done, there could be after-effects.

Here are some reasons for seeing your doctor:

- loss of consciousness just before or after the fall
- injuries
- a strong or lingering pain
- dizziness
- nausea
- overall weakness
- headaches
- vision problems



In some cases, a fall may be a sign of an illness or be caused by a medication.
Let your doctor know if you fell so he or she can assess the situation.

Additional Safety Strategies:

- consider getting a personal alarm or have a cordless phone close at hand
- have a friend or family member phone you at regular intervals
- give your keys to someone you trust who could use them in an emergency



**Central Intake and Triage
Orillia Soldiers Memorial Hospital
170 Colborne St. W.
Orillia ON. L3V 2Z3
Tel: 705-325-2201 Ext. 3851
Toll Free: 1-877-665-6065
Fax: 705-330-3201**

References
Public Health Agency of Canada: Division of Aging and Seniors.
Retrieved from www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/seniors-aines