

You can prevent falls:

By having a safe home and lifestyle!

Most falls occur at home — especially in the kitchen, on the stairs and in the bathroom. Here are some ideas to make the inside and the outside of your home a safer place for you.

Kitchen

- Eliminate throw rugs.
- Have everything within reach so that you don't need to climb; if you must climb, use a stable step stool with a safety rail.
- Wipe up any spills immediately to prevent slipping.

Stairs

- Have handrails on both sides of the stairs.
- Make sure stairs are properly lit.
- Don't put things on the stairs.

Bathroom

- Install grab bars and non-slip mats in the tub and shower.
- Use a non-skid bath mat.
- Install a night-light in the hallway and bathroom.
- Wipe up moisture or spills immediately.

Living room

- Leave generous space to move safely around furniture.
- Make sure electrical cords are out of the way.
- Ensure furniture and lamps are steady and stable.

Walkways and entryways

- Have a small bench in your entryway to help you put on and remove your boots.
- Make sure your steps and walkways are free of ice, snow, newspapers or wet leaves.
- Have a handrail installed along your front walkway if necessary.

Garden

- Put the hose away in a secure area when you're not watering.
- Make sure rakes and shovels are safely put away when not in use.
- Wear shoes that support and stabilize you.
- Have garden tools handy (in a pail or in your gardening apron pockets).
- Use a kneeling pad while weeding; rise slowly when you're done.
- Don't walk on wet grass; keep the yard, pathways and steps free of leaves and twigs.
- Make sure garden furniture and ornaments are steady and in good repair.

When going out

- Take all the time you need — plan ahead, don't rush.
- Wear footwear to prevent slipping and avoid laces that may come undone.
- Use your walking aid if needed.
- Walk slowly and carefully — be alert to sidewalk cracks, obstacles, slopes, slippery surfaces and other hazards.
- Don't load yourself down with packages; take advantage of home delivery or use a pushcart (which can also act as a walking aid).
- Be a defensive walker — watch for traffic, bicycles and rollerbladers.
- Plan your trip so that you don't have to go out during rush hour, darkness or bad weather.

Other precautions

- Don't try to do tasks that are too strenuous or potentially dangerous. Find a volunteer — a friend, a neighbour, a relative, building maintenance staff — to help you with the heavy work.
- Take care not to trip on your pet (or your grandchild's toys!) — always check the floor, the stairs, the hallway...
- Turn the lights on ahead of you while moving through the house.
- Take off your reading glasses when you're not reading.
- Use your cane or walking aid inside the house if necessary.
- Don't rush to the phone: if you have an answering service, your callers will leave a message; if not, they will call back.
- Finally, know that you have the right to be safe. If you notice any hazards or unsafe conditions, let the proper authorities know (municipality, apartment owner, seniors' centre, store staff). Cracks can be repaired; public ramps can be installed; traffic lights can have their timing changed... Reporting unsafe conditions benefits you and the entire community!

Please feel free to photocopy this Fact Sheet!