

For Canadian seniors, falls are one of the leading cause of fatal injuries.

Source: Public Health Agency of Canada, Division of Aging and Seniors (<http://origin.phac-aspc.gc.ca/seniors-aines/>)

Keep yourself healthy and active

Healthy eating promotes a healthy heart, strong bones and good resistance to infection and injury. Skipping meals or not eating healthy can cause weakness and dizziness, and increase your risk of a fall.

Remaining physically active reduces your risk of falling by giving your more flexible joints, stronger bones and muscles, better heart function, more energy and less fatigue.

Whatever your current physical condition, you can engage in some form of physical activity. Check with your doctor before beginning a new fitness program.

To promote a healthy community and support those we serve, St. Joseph's Health Care London is a smoke-free organization. Smoking is not permitted on hospital property, including parking lots and the parking garage.

Contact

Location

Parkwood Institute
Main Building
550 Wellington Road
London, ON N6C 0A7
Telephone: 519-685-4000

Parking

Park in the visitor's lot 1.
The cost is \$5 (cash or credit card) upon entering. Rates are subject to change.

If you park in the visitor's lot, enter through Parkwood Institute's Main Building entrance. From the lobby, look to the left for the double doors beside the elevators. Follow the signs to reach the Geriatric Day Hospital.

Visit us at:
www.sjhc.london.on.ca/geriatricdayhospital

Parkwood Institute

Falls Prevention Education for Patients and Families

Ambulatory Setting

CARING FOR THE
BODY, MIND & SPIRIT
SINCE 1869



sjhc.london.on.ca

Renowned for compassionate care, St. Joseph's is one of the best academic health care organizations in Canada dedicated to helping people live to their fullest by minimizing the effects of injury, disease and disability through excellence in care, teaching and research.

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What factors can increase your risk of falling?

- Past history of a fall
- Poor balance when walking
- Decreased muscle/bone strength
- Reduced vision or hearing
- Health problems such as arthritis, stroke, bladder difficulty, Parkinson's Disease
- Multiple medications or the side-effects of some medications
- Unsafe physical environment
- Thinking difficulties/dementia
- Drop in blood pressure with standing

If you fall:

- Call for help
- Make sure you are not injured before trying to get up
- If you are hurt or wet, try to cover yourself up (eg. blanket, table cloth) to stay warm until help arrives

What you and/or your family can do to help prevent falls:

- Inform health care team of any falls in the last year or difficulties in walking or balance
- Use the walking aid as instructed
- Use well-fitting and supportive footwear (laces or Velcro to fasten, closed-in low heels and firm, non-slip soles)

Optimize your bone health to reduce risk of fractures.

- Talk to your doctor about your need for calcium and vitamin supplements (we recommend most people to be on Vitamin D)
- Ask your doctor to assess your risk for osteoporosis and consider a bone mineral density scan
- If you have osteoporosis or have risk for osteoporosis or have had a hip, wrist or spine fracture previously, you may require medication to prevent future fractures

What you and/or your family can do to help prevent falls in ambulatory care:

- Inform care team of any falls in the last year or difficulties in walking or balance
- Bring walking aid with you and use as instructed
- Use well-fitting supportive footwear (laces or Velcro to fasten, closed-in low heels and firm, non-slip soles)

What you can do at home to prevent falls:

- Eat well, stay fit and use a walking aid as recommended
- Take medications as prescribed
- Limit alcohol use
- Rise slowly from a bed/chair to prevent a sudden drop in blood pressure and dizziness (tell doctor if this occurs)
- Use correct eyeglasses/hearing aids—test vision/hearing every two years
- Walk and climb stairs slowly
- Hold solid handrails on both sides of a stairwell
- Ensure pathways in the home and outside (steps, sidewalks) are dry, well lit, even and free of clutter
- Avoid walking on ice or slippery surfaces
- Remove scatter rugs/mats
- Install appropriately placed grab bars for toilet, tub and shower
- Optimize chair and toilet seat heights
- Use a secured rubber bath mat or non-skid strips in tub and shower
- Store supplies in easy to reach places
- Ask others to help with tasks that would put you at risk of falling
- Beware of pets underfoot
- Consider getting a personal alarm such as ConnectCare.