



ANYONE CAN FALL

Prevent it from happening to you

Home & Community Safety

To ensure your safety, it's best to be proactive by identifying and addressing hazards before an emergency or a life-changing event can occur. Unfortunately, many don't realize that they may be at risk of a fall-related injury and don't feel the need to take the necessary steps to make their home and/or their community safer.

Your home is a place where you should always feel safe. To help increase your sense of security, there is a wide range of home safety measures that you could take. However, it may be tough to know where to start with making these necessary changes if you choose to complete them by yourself.

In addition, being aware of outdoor hazards is important to help you avoid falls when out in your community. Issues such as uneven sidewalks or a lack of benches along walkways can also contribute to an increased risk of falls.

The good news is that family, friends, municipal administrators and home safety specialists such as occupational therapists can all play a role to help make your home and community safer. Keep in mind that by reaching out to others for support, you can better reduce your risk of falling, prevent serious injuries and maintain your independence.



Trauma NB

Finding
Balance



To learn more about preventing falls, visit www.findingbalancenb.ca

Home Safety

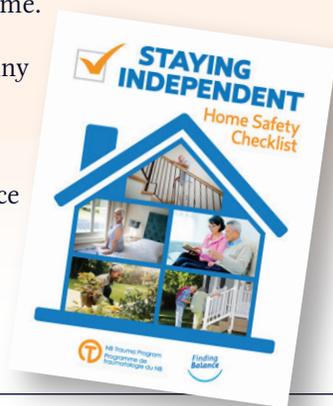
- One of the most important things you can do is to make your home safer. You can achieve this by taking steps such as:
 - Making sure all hallways, stairs, and paths are well lit and clear of objects such as extension cords or shoes.
 - Taping all area rugs to the floor so they don't move when you walk on them. Avoid placing scatter rugs at the bottom or top of stairs.
 - Putting a rubber mat or non-slip strips on the bathtub floor to make showering safer.
- Some older adults may require more extensive home modifications to help them stay safe. This can be done with the installation of assistive devices such as:
 - A chairlift to make it easier and safer to go up and down your staircase
 - Grab bars installed in the shower and near the toilet to help prevent slips, trips and falls.
 - A height-adjustable bed to make it easier and safer to get in and out of bed

Remember that certain home improvements may require two or more people to complete and/or professional expertise.

Home Safety Checklist

Falls in older adults are often due to hazards that are easy to overlook but simple to fix. To help you address this issue, we encourage you to complete a home safety checklist from a reputable source.

The following *Home Safety Checklist* and accompanying *Personal Action Plan* one-pager may be used to help identify some of the most common hazards in and around your home. This is done by going through each room and taking note of any changes and/or repairs that needs to be completed. This useful resource, which is available on the Finding Balance NB website, also provides you with helpful suggestions for reducing and removing those hazards.



Community Safety

- Community hazards are often related to design standards. Unfortunately, certain building codes may not take the needs of older adults into account. Examples include:
 - poor stair and handrail design
 - inadequate lighting along walkways
 - lack of curb ramps and rest areas
 - presence of obstacles on sidewalks that impede safe passage, such as bike racks and store signage
- Ice and snow accumulation can also create barriers to safe access to roadways, sidewalks and buildings if appropriate precautionary measures are not taken.
- If you wish to get involved, you can encourage your community to take steps towards being recognized as an Age-Friendly Community
- By collaborating with other likeminded people in your community, you can help establish policies, services, and structures that are more responsive to the needs of older adults and that promote healthy aging and wellness
- For additional information and resources about Age-Friendly Communities please visit the senior's section of The Wellness Movement website at www.wellnessnb.ca.

Getting Help and Support

If you are unsure of where to start, you are encouraged to ask your primary care provider or a home safety specialist for help and support. This is important especially if you have any concerns about:

- Completing a comprehensive home safety assessment to help identify potential hazards
- Obtaining additional information about assistive devices or other safety equipment that meet your personal needs
- Clarifying your preferences in safety measures that could be used in and around your home
- Helping to identify available funding programs which you may qualify since certain home modifications can be expensive
- Proper installation of safety equipment and/or assistive devices in the home

Keep in mind that you may be creating a new hazard if you try to install or repair something in an unsafe manner.

**Falls are not a normal part of aging.
Talk to your primary care provider if you have had a fall.**

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