

FALL PREVENTION RESOURCE

FOR ADULTS 65+ AND CAREGIVERS



All adults 65+ should be screened annually (or anytime they have a fall) for fall risk. This can be done alone or with a caregiver, community-based program, primary care provider or allied health professional. This tool highlights the recommended actions to address fall risk screening, assessment and interventions for community-dwelling adults 65+.

Fall definition: A fall is defined as an event which results in a person coming to rest inadvertently on the ground or floor or other lower level, with or without injury.

Find out if you, or someone you know, are at risk of falling.

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23-5606


York Region

FALL RISK SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL

Complete the Fall Risk Self-Assessment Tool to determine your risk and risk factors for falling.

CIRCLE "YES" or "NO" to the following statements - Note the first two questions count for 2 points each if 'yes':

CIRCLE "YES" or "NO"			HELPFUL TIPS
I have fallen in the past year.	YES (2)	NO (0)	Learn more about reducing your risk; people who have fallen are more likely to fall again.
I use or have been advised to use a cane or walker to get around safely.	YES (2)	NO (0)	Talk with a physiotherapist about the most appropriate walking aid for your needs.
Sometimes I feel unsteady when I am walking.	YES (1)	NO (0)	Exercising to build strength and to improve your balance can reduce your risk of a fall.
I steady myself by holding onto furniture when walking at home.	YES (1)	NO (0)	Do balance exercises every day. Consider having a home safety assessment. Remove hazards at home that might cause a trip or slip.
I am worried about falling.	YES (1)	NO (0)	Learning how to prevent a fall can reduce fear and promote active living.
I push with my hands to stand up from a chair.	YES (1)	NO (0)	Strengthening your muscles can reduce your risk of falling and being injured.
I have some trouble stepping up onto a curb.	YES (1)	NO (0)	Daily exercise can help improve your strength and balance.
I often have to rush to the toilet.	YES (1)	NO (0)	Rushing increases your risk of falling. Make sure the pathway to the bathroom is well lit and free of clutter. Talk with your doctor about potential treatment options.
I have lost some feeling in my feet.	YES (1)	NO (0)	Talk with your doctor or health care provider as numbness in your feet can cause falls.
I take medication that sometimes makes me feel light-headed or more tired than usual.	YES (1)	NO (0)	Talk with your doctor or pharmacist about medication side effects that may increase your risk of a fall.
I take medication to help me sleep or improve my mood.	YES (1)	NO (0)	Talk with your doctor or pharmacist about other ways to get a good night's sleep or improve your mood.
I often feel sad or depressed.	YES (1)	NO (0)	Talk with your doctor or health care provider about symptoms of depression and finding help with positive solutions.
Add up the number of points for each "YES" answer and enter your total score.	TOTAL SCORE: _____		If you scored 4 POINTS or more, you may be at risk. Talk to your doctor or health care provider about any questions you may have.

* This resource was adapted from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's "Stay Independent" brochure with permission from: Waterloo Wellington Local Health Integration Network, Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health and the Region of Waterloo Public Health.

SCORED LESS THAN 4 ON THE FALL RISK SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL?

See the **NO - Not at risk of falling strategies**:

NO - Not at risk of falling strategies

- Do activities to build strength and balance more than 2x/week and visit falls.centralhealthline.ca to learn **Which exercise program is best for me?**
- Have regular check-ups and eye exams
- Eat a well-balanced diet. Follow Canada's Food Guide and enjoy a variety of healthy food each day
- Use medications wisely. Medications can affect your alertness, balance and stability. Review your medications with your health care professional or pharmacist every six months
- Do a home safety check. Ensure good lighting, particularly on stairs. Don't rush – rushing increases your chances of falling
- Stay socially connected
- Speak to a health care professional about Vitamin D
- Screen for fall risk annually or talk to a health care professional if you have a fall. Review the helpful tips found in the Fall Risk Self-Assessment Tool**

**Speak to a health care professional if you feel further assessment is needed*

SCORED MORE THAN 4 ON THE FALL RISK SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL?

Additional screening and assessment is required, talk to your health care professional

What to expect when you see your health care professional

Screening

You will be asked these **KEY screening questions**:

- One or more falls in the last year?
- Concern (worried) about falling
- Difficulty with walking or balance?
- Scored more than 4 on the Fall Risk Self-Assessment

If you screen yes to any KEY questions, you are at risk of falling, and your health care professional will do a more detailed assessment

Assessment

Clinician will evaluate:

- Complete a Timed Up & Go Test to assess gait, strength, and balance
- Review the results of the **Fall Risk Self-Assessment Tool**
- Ask about fall history and concern (worried) about falling
- Do a physical exam
- Ask about adequate social supports
- Talk about Vitamin D
- Refer as appropriate to: physiotherapy, occupational therapy, eye and/or foot care specialist, etc.
- Refer to falls.centralhealthline.ca to learn **Which exercise program is best for me?** or to see a list of community fall prevention programs
- Refer to [Ontario.ca/seniors](https://ontario.ca/seniors) or A Guide for Programs and Services for Seniors for health, social and financial supports
- Review fracture risk assessment and monitor bone health
- Manage and monitor existing health condition(s) blood pressure
- Review and manage medications

You may be at risk of falling. Talk to your health care professional about the "YES - At risk of falling strategies"

YES - At risk of falling strategies

Follow the recommended fall prevention strategies for those screened **NOT AT RISK** of Falling

AND these additional recommended fall prevention strategies:

- Speak to a physiotherapist to improve gait, strength and balance and/or an occupational therapist for a home safety assessment
- Visit falls.centralhealthline.ca to learn **Which exercise program is best for me?** or to see a list of community fall prevention programs
- Speak with a health care professional about your fall risk, bone health and fracture risk
- Contact the Home & Community Care Support Services – Central for information about home care services and other resources

IF YOU ARE AT RISK, FOLLOW UP WITH YOUR HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONAL IN 30 TO 90 DAYS WHO WILL:

- Review the care plan
- Encourage fall risk reduction behaviours
- Address any barriers to recommendations
- Recommend transition to maintenance exercise program when ready

Use the Fall Risk Self Assessment Tool ANNUALLY and after every fall.