PREVENT FALLS

stay in the game!

Vancouver
Coastal Health
Promoting wellness. Ensuring care.

Falls are the leading cause of injury-related hospitalization, injury-related death, and the major reason for admission to a residential care facility. Falls and fall-related injury decrease the quality of life and independence of many seniors each year. A fall can happen anywhere, but most falls happen in your own home. Be active, take your time, live safe and choose smart to reduce your chances of having a fall, to continue the activities you love, and to "stay in the game".

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1 BE ACTIVE

▸ **Exercise** to ensure good strength and balance; it's the best way to prevent falls. You may think poor balance and weak muscles are a normal part of aging. They are not.

▸ **Join** an exercise class, develop an exercise routine at home, include walking in your every-day activity, or ask your health care provider to help find the best physical exercise for you.

2 TAKE YOUR TIME

▸ **Rushing** while doing everyday activities such as answering the phone, going to the wash-room, or answering the door can contribute to falls.

▸ **Slow down** and take your time.

▸ **Do one task** at a time.

▸ **Look** where you are going and try not to be distracted.

▸ **Sit** for a moment before getting out of bed and get out of chairs slowly. Get your balance before you walk.

stay in the game
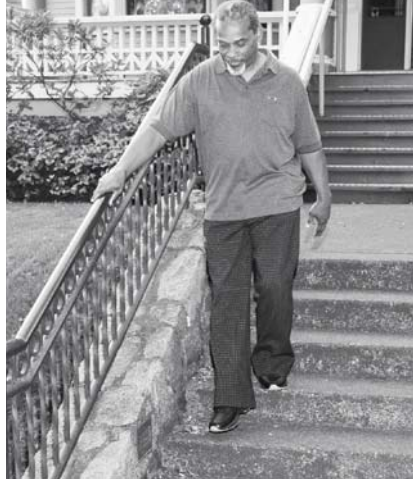
3 LIVE SAFE

Clear the Way

▸ **Stairs** and walking areas should be kept free of clutter such as shoes, books, and unnecessary furniture.

▸ **Electrical cords** can easily cause a trip and need to be moved out of the way of walking areas.

▸ **Pets** underfoot can cause you to trip and fall.

Tread Carefully

▸ **Handrails** on stairs that are easy-to-grab and extend beyond the top and bottom stair are best installed along both sides.

▸ **Shoes** that are well-fitted, sturdy, and low-heeled with non-slip soles provide the best stability.

▸ **Non-slip mats** in the bathroom and shower, and floor rugs with non-skid backing will prevent slips.

▸ **Canes and walkers** can help you stay more independent. Contact your health care provider if you need help deciding if you need an assistive device, or how to use one properly.

Turn on the Light

▸ **Lighting** can be improved in your whole house, inside and out.

▸ **Night-lights** can help to light the path between your bedroom and bathroom.

▸ **Stairways** need to be well lit from both the top and bottom. Remember to turn on the lights before using the stairs.

4 CHOOSE SMART

▸ **Medication** use can be a factor in increasing your chances of falling. Side effects, interactions between drugs, and errors in following prescription directions can contribute to falls. The more prescriptions you take the greater your risk, especially if you are taking medication to help you sleep.

▸ **Know** what you are taking each medication for.

▸ **Never use** someone else's medication.

▸ **Choose** the same drug store for all your prescription and non-prescription needs.

▸ **Visit** your doctor and pharmacist to review your medications periodically.

▸ **Good nutrition** and careful use of alcohol are smart choices that can also reduce the chances of a fall.

▸ **Eyesight** and blood pressure checks on a regular basis can identify a problem before it contributes to a fall.

▸ **Frequent falls** and unexplained falls signal a need to visit your doctor.

Falls are not an inevitable part of aging and most falls can be prevented. You can prevent falls and "stay in the game" by choosing to be active, take your time, live safe and choose smart.

For more information, call the Central Intake number in your area:

North Shore Central Intake
604-983-6740

Pemberton Health Centre
604-894-6939

Richmond Central Intake
604-278-3361

Squamish Community Health Care
604-892-2293

Sunshine Coast Central Intake
604-741-0726

Vancouver Central Intake
604-263-7377

Whistler Health Care Centre
604-932-4911

Richmond Seniors Falls Prevention Program
604-233-3145

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Fall & Injury Prevention

Website: **fallprevention.vch.ca**   Staff: see Fall & Injury Prevention on VCHConnect