

Wellness Articles

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If you would like to be added to the distribution list for these articles, please email: Rebecca.johnson2@albertahealthservices.ca. You will receive a monthly email containing articles for the upcoming four weeks.

An archive of past wellness articles is available at <http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/9966.asp>

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Build Strength and Balance to Prevent Falls

Falls are the leading cause of injury among older adults. Our bodies naturally change with age which affects how we feel, move, and behave. The older we get, the greater the risk of falling. There's no doubt falls can have devastating consequences such as injury, chronic pain and a reduced quality of life, but by taking action you can prevent it from happening to you.

Most falls can be avoided by taking steps to reduce the risks. Seniors can prevent falls by identifying reasons related to their health or environment that could cause them to fall. Having your medications reviewed yearly, visiting your eye doctor for an annual checkup, wearing supportive foot wear, and making your home safer by removing tripping hazards and improving lighting are all great things you can do. So is challenging your balance, building strength, and being active.

November is Falls Prevention month across Canada and this year's campaign focuses on the fact that you're never too old to start being active and no matter what your abilities are today, you can always improve your strength and balance to prevent a fall.

As an older adult, regular physical activity is one of the most important things you can do for your health. It can prevent many of the health problems that seem to come with age. It also helps your muscles grow stronger so you can keep doing your day-to-day activities without becoming dependent on others.

Older adults with muscle weakness are 4-5 times more likely to fall, so aim for 30 minutes or more of physical activity at least 5 days each week. Walking, dancing, swimming and gardening are great ways to be active. Work on your balance by controlling your movements. Try reaching while standing, toe and heel raises, stepping in different directions, step ups or half squats. Yoga and tai chi are also great activities to try. Build strength by doing exercises for your leg muscles. Use bands, weights, or your own body weight to do things like hamstring curls and side leg lifts.

Choose something you like to do as you are more likely to stick to it.

Remember, it's never too late to start being active!



To find out more about keeping active and falls prevention for older adults visit the [Finding Balance](#) campaign and [My Health Alberta](#).