

## Falls risk checklist

How at risk of a fall are you? Use this quick checklist to identify your own areas of risk. You might want to discuss the list with your family, doctor or a health worker.  
Circle **YES** or **NO** to the following questions:

Have you had a recent fall or stumble?	Yes No
Have you lost balance or felt dizzy when walking, turning or standing up?	Yes No
Do you attempt risky activities beyond your level of ability?	Yes No
Have you had a fall or near fall caused by slipping or tripping on something inside or outside?	Yes No
Do you need to rush to the toilet, especially at night?	Yes No
Are you taking four or more regular medications?	Yes No
Do you have a chronic health condition or disability?	Yes No
Have you reduced your physical or social activities due to fear of falling?	Yes No
Are you feeling stressed, worried or depressed?	Yes No

**If you answered YES to any of these questions, use this brochure to take action. Contact your local doctor or La Paz Regional Hospital for more advice.**

## Professional support

For professional advice on preventing falls contact:

- ⌘ your doctor or pharmacist about safe use of medications
- ⌘ an occupational therapist about making your home environment safer
- ⌘ a physiotherapist about suitable exercise programs and walking aids
- ⌘ an optometrist about checking your eyesight
- ⌘ a podiatrist about foot care and footwear
- ⌘ a dietician or community nurse about eating a healthy diet
- ⌘ local council about help with personal care and home maintenance
- ⌘ local council about community hazards
- ⌘ community health organizations about managing specific chronic health conditions
- ⌘ your doctor about referral to a Falls and Balance Clinic.

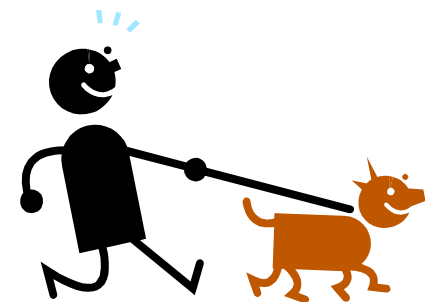
### For further information contact:

In 2009 the Department of Health funded Northern Health, in conjunction with National Ageing Research Institute, to review falls prevention resources for the Department of Health's website. The materials used as the basis of this generic resource were developed by Outer East Primary Care Partnership under a Service Agreement with the Department of Human Services, now the Department of Health. This and other resources to maintain health and wellbeing of older people are available from [www.health.vic.gov.au/agedcare](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/agedcare)

# FALLS

## ARE

# PREVENTABLE



## Falls are preventable

Approximately one in three people over 65 have a fall at least once a year. Any fall, even if there is no serious injury, may have long-term consequences on your quality of life.

The good news is: most falls are preventable.

### Why do older people fall?

Falls usually result from a combination of causes. Research has identified the following as the most common factors that increase the risk of a fall.

- ✂ Some medical conditions affect balance and reduce physical ability.
- ✂ Some medications (or combinations) can affect balance.
- ✂ Inactivity results in loss of bone and muscle strength, and poorer balance.
- ✂ Gradual changes to eyesight occur with age.
- ✂ Painful feet and unsupportive shoes affect balance.
- ✂ Obvious slip; trip and fall hazards may be ignored.
- ✂ Lack of acceptance of current capabilities may result in risky behavior.
- ✂ Fear of falling can lead to a reduction in physical activities and social contact.

### What can you do?

The actions that follow describe what you can do to keep yourself safe, active and independent. Take action to enhance your quality of life

## Actions to prevent falls

### General health

- ✂ Have regular general healths checks and tell your doctor about any dizziness, loss of balance or difficulty walking
- ✂ Review your medications with your doctor
- ✂ Report falls or near falls to your doctor
- ✂ Eat a healthy diet, including calcium-rich foods for bone strength.
- ✂ Find out as much as you can about managing any chronic medical conditions.

### Activity and exercise

- ✂ Keep active – do some moderate exercise most days of the week.
- ✂ Find an exercise activity you enjoy for ideas contact community health services, community/neighborhood centers, fitness and activity centers, council activity registers, local papers.
- ✂ Be aware of potentially risky activities
- ✂ Seek help if fear of falling is limiting your involvement in physical activity

### Eyesight and vision

- ✂ Have your eyes and glasses checked every year
- ✂ Provide adequate lighting throughout your home
- ✂ Wait for your eyes to adjust when moving between bright and dark areas

### Feet and footwear

- ✂ Wear comfortable, well-fitting shoes with low, broad heels and non-slip soles
- ✂ Take care of any pain or other problems with your feet.

### Home and public safety

- ✂ Be alert for slip or trip hazards at home or outside, such as spills, cords, loose mats.
- ✂ Remove clutter around the home and keep walkways clear.
- ✂ Install handrails for steps (inside and outside) and non-slip strips/mats for shower/bath.
- ✂ Identify hazards at home and have them fixed. Use the checklist on the Department of Human Services Aged Care website:  
<http://www.health.vic.gov.au/agedcare>

- ✂ Report hazards with paths and public areas to local government.
- ✂ Seek support from local government if daily tasks and personal care activities become difficult or dangerous.

### If you do have a fall...

- **Stay quiet for a few moments before moving**
- **Tell someone (doctor, family, friend, caregiver) you have had a fall**
- **Take action now to prevent another fall.**

**For more detailed information and advice, contact your local doctor or La Paz Regional Hospital:**

**928-669-9201**