



Falls Safety and Prevention

Safe at Home

Safety is important and everyone plays a role. If you are receiving care in the home, you can expect that your Care Coordinator or service provider will complete a safety assessment during their first visit with you and provide recommendations on how to be safe in your home.

Anyone can fall. But as we age, our risk of falling becomes greater. Bumps and bruises may heal but a fractured bone could mean surgery, a long hospital stay, or a reduction in your ability to care for yourself or enjoy your favourite activities. You can prevent falls by making the needed adjustments to your home. Consider these tips:

In the Bathroom

- Take extra caution in the bathroom as it is the most dangerous room in the house due to slippery floors
- Remove throw rugs
- Use a bathmat with nonskid backing and remove when not in use
- In the tub/shower, use a nonskid rubber mat; ensure it is secure before stepping on it
- Consider installing grab bars in your tub/shower
- If you are using bath equipment (i.e. bath bench), ensure it is in good condition and is installed properly



- Make sure your toilet is secure and in good repair
- Use a night-light in halls and bathroom
- Do not lock the bathroom door

In the Kitchen

- Remove throw rugs and cords from the floor
- Repair damaged flooring
- Keep commonly used items within reach on countertops or shelves
- Avoid using step stools and chairs to reach high cupboards
- Make sure tables and chairs are in good condition

In the Bedroom

- Keep clothing within reach on shelves, in drawers at waist height
- Add lamps or night-lights so lighting is adequate at all times
- Keep clutter off the floors

In the Hallway and on Stairs

- Clear all pathways of clutter and furniture
- Make sure the lighting is adequate at all times
- Consider using night-lights around your home
- Consider installing light switches at the ends of hallways or at the top and bottom of stairwells

Pets in the House

Be mindful of where your pets are in the house. Being tripped or pulled over by a pet is a common cause of falls. Consider employing a dog walker if you are unsteady on your feet outside.

Living Alone

Have a phone friend to touch base with you every day. Use a portable phone. If you have a visual impairment, use a phone with large buttons.

Falls Facts

- Falls are the leading cause of injury among older Canadians.
- 20-30% of seniors experience one or more falls each year.
- Falls are the cause of 85% of seniors' injury-related hospitalizations.
- Falls are the cause of 95% of all hip-fractures.
- 50% of all falls causing hospitalization happen at home.

More Falls Information

For more falls prevention information, call the North Simcoe Muskoka Integrated Regional Falls Program at **1-877-665-6065**.

Preparing for a Home Visit

Safe At Home

There are times when healthcare providers will come to a person's home. It is important to prepare for a home visit to support the safety of the care provider coming into your home.

Preparing for a Visit

- Tell your Care Coordinator about any special circumstances about your home.
- Have an area available for hand washing with liquid soap and paper towels.
- Keep walkways cleared of ice and snow.
- Do not plan for guests or calls during your home visit with your care provider and anyone you wish to be there as part of your care team.
- Give reasonable notice to your care provider if you need to cancel or reschedule your service.

During the Visit

- Refrain from smoking and alcohol use.
- Avoid wearing (perfume/cologne) or burning (candles/incense) scented products.
- Secure your pets unless you have a service animal permitted to accompany you.
- Minimize noise and distractions.
- Store and lock all firearms and weapons in accordance with law.



For Your Safety

As part of our commitment to your safety all members of your care team wear a photo identification badge that shows their name, picture and their care agency.

To support your safety:

- Always ask to see their identification when coming to our home.
- If you are not sure of someone's identity, do not allow them to come into your home. Call us first to confirm their identity: **310-2222**.
- Members of your care team practice hand hygiene and may wear protective equipment (e.g., gloves, mask, goggles, gown) to protect you and the

community. If you experience care provided at your home, and your provider wears protective equipment, it will be left behind for you to dispose of in the regular garbage to prevent the spread of infection. For more information, please contact us.

- Our Care Coordinators and Service Providers do NOT need any information about your bank accounts, credit cards, Personal Identification Number (PIN), or you debit cards. Patients who are applying to Long-Term Care Homes must provide some financial information such as Old Age Security, but not banking information. If someone in your care requests this information, DO NOT share it. Please advise us immediately or call your local police.

Medication Safety and Storage

Safe At Home

Everyone plays a role in medication safety. Knowing which medications you are taking and what they are for is an important first step.

How to Safely Manage Your Medications:

- Keep an up-to-date list of all your medications such as prescriptions, vitamins, over-the-counter medications, or natural health products. Include the medication name, dose, and how and when you are taking the medications.
- Keep this list with you at all times so that you can easily share it with your health care team.
- Keep the name and telephone number of the pharmacy you use in a handy spot.
- If you have any questions about how to manage your medications, speak to your health care team.

How to Safely Store and Throw Away Medications

- Keep medications out of sight and reach of children and adults who may become confused.
- Use cabinets with safety locks or locked boxes. Always put medications away after each use.
- Store medications in their original containers and keep them separate from



- your family members' medications so they do not get mixed up.
- Do not throw out any unused medications at home. Bring them to your pharmacy to be thrown away safely. Read more at healthsteward.ca/returning-medications/.

Important:

If you suspect an overdose, get help right away by calling **911** or the Ontario Poison Centre at **1-800-268-9017**.

An overdose is a medical emergency, and prompt medical attention can help to prevent death or lasting health consequences.

What If You Take Too Much of Your Medication?

Medications, especially medications injected into the body, can be harmful if they are not taken or given as instructed by your health care team. A medication overdose can happen because there is too much of a medication in your body at once. This can happen either by accident or on purpose. Too much of a medication in the body can lead to unwanted symptoms or side effects. The symptoms of an overdose will be different for different medications.

Symptoms may include:

- Severe chest pain
- Severe headache
- Anxiety
- Hallucination
- Extreme agitation
- Seizures
- Changes in body
- Abnormal or difficulty breathing
- Passing out or loss of consciousness
- Skin colour changes (bluish tint or red/flushed)
- Fast, slowed, or irregular heart rate

The Ontario Drug Benefit

The Ontario Drug Benefit (ODB) program covers most of the cost of approximately 5,000 prescription drug products for eligible individuals that receive services through Home and Community Care Support Services. The Care Coordinator will assess for eligibility as part of the initial and ongoing assessments.

Do You Know About MedsCheck?

You may be able to have a free one-on-one meeting with a pharmacist for the MedsCheck program. The pharmacist will go over all your medications and make sure you know how to take them properly, including how to use your inhalers, possible side effects, and how to avoid bad interactions with other medications.

You are able to get a MedsCheck at your pharmacy if you live in Ontario and have a valid OHIP card and:

- Take 3 or more prescription medications for an ongoing chronic health condition;
- Have been diagnosed with type 1 or 2 diabetes;
- Live in a long-term care home.

If you are unable to go to a pharmacy, a pharmacist may be able to visit you at home. Speak to your pharmacist or health care team about booking a MedsCheck.

Hand Hygiene

Safe At Home

The main way germs are spread from one person to another is by our hands. Keeping your hands clean is the best thing that you can do to prevent the spread of infection.

It is important to clean your hands properly throughout the day as we handle many things covered in germs like keyboards, light switches, doorknobs and telephones. You should always wash your hands before preparing or eating food, after using the washroom or changing diapers, after you cough, sneeze, or use a tissue to wipe your nose, and after being in contact with someone who is sick.

Important Reminders:

- Use warm water.
- Lather (rub) your hands with soap for 15 seconds to get dirt and germs off. Be sure to get fingertips.
- Remove jewelry (rings, bracelets, watches), to be sure to clean well between your fingers, the back of your hands and around your thumbs and wrist.

