



## Preventing Falls Together

### KEEPING YOURSELF HEALTHY AND ACTIVE

What does falls prevention have to do with fitness and food? Plenty! Spending time and energy on your health can provide a big payoff. You will not only feel better, you will considerably reduce your chances of having a fall or other injury.

#### Benefits of Healthy Eating

With age, your body continues to need essential nutrients to function correctly. Food deficiencies in seniors can cause or increase the risk of bone loss, heart disease, diabetes and arthritis, all of which increase your risk of falling. Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating provides general guidelines on the foods you need to maintain or improve your health. Healthy eating promotes a healthy heart, strong bones and resistance to infection and injury. Eating poorly, skipping meals, or not eating enough can cause weakness and dizziness and increase your risk of a fall. That is why it's so important to eat regular, well-balanced meals every day.

Please check all items that apply to you.

#### Nutrition

- Have you checked out Canada's Food Guide to understand your basic nutritional needs?
- Do you eat a variety of foods from each food group every day?
- Do you often choose whole grain and enriched products?
- Do you often choose lower-fat foods and milk products?
- Do you select leaner meats, poultry and fish, or meat alternatives such as dried peas, beans and lentils?
- Do you eat at regular times?
- Do you eat breakfast every day?

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### Benefits of Active Living

Remaining physically active also reduces your risk of falling by giving you more flexible joints, stronger bones and muscles, better heart and lung function, more energy, less fatigue, better sleep, and less anxiety and depression. Being active includes everyday activities such as walking, climbing stairs, gardening, and shopping, as well as exercise classes and recreational activities like swimming, golf, and Tai Chi. Whatever your current physical condition, you can engage in some form of physical activity with the help of your doctor or physiotherapist.

Canada's Physical Activity Guide for Older Adults explains why physical activity is important for seniors. It offers tips and easy ways to increase your level of activity, improve your health, and prevent and manage diseases. The guide can be found online at: [www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/pau-uap/paguide/](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/pau-uap/paguide/)

Please check all items that apply to you.

### Physical Activity

- Do you build some physical activity into your daily routine? (e.g., walking, regular exercise class, at-home exercise routine)
- Have you had a check-up recently and talked to your doctor about increasing your physical activity?
- Have you checked into exercise programs for seniors available through your local seniors' centre, YM/YWCA, recreation centre, etc?

There is no time like the present. Even when one starts physical activity later in life, it can lead to significant improvements in health and quality of life. Choose activities that will build your endurance, increase your flexibility, and improve your strength and balance. Remember to check with your doctor first and to start slowly.