

Every year, 1 in 3 older Albertans will fall but there are things you can do to prevent falling.

Medication

As you age, your health needs may change. You may take more than one medication, vitamin, or supplement to stay healthy. It is important to review all your medications with your doctor or pharmacist.

- Be aware that medications that relax you, help you sleep, or improve your mood can increase your risk of falling.
- Always follow the instructions and doses when taking medications.
- Use only one pharmacy to fill your prescriptions.
- Keep a current medication list in your wallet and at home.
- Do not share prescription medications.
- Return expired medication to your pharmacist.
- Ask your pharmacist about pill packs.

Questions to ask your pharmacists about your medications:

- What is the medication used for?
- Will it cause dizziness or drowsiness as a side effect?
- Will it cause blurred or double vision?
- What should I do if I have side effects?
- What should I do if I miss a dose?
- Should I avoid alcohol or other foods and beverages?

Talk to your doctor or pharmacist about all of your medications, vitamins, and supplements to lower your risk of a fall.

Alcohol

As you age, your body and life circumstances change which makes drinking alcohol riskier in the following ways:

- Your body processes alcohol more slowly and your blood alcohol rises higher.
- Loss of strength, balance, and coordination can increase risk of falls.
- Loneliness and isolation can lead to drinking alcohol to cope.
- Alcohol can negatively affect memory and cognitive abilities.
- Some medications interact badly with alcohol.

The Canadian Coalition for Seniors' Mental Health: Low-Risk Drinking Guidelines for Older Adults recommends the following for adults over 65 years old:

- **FOR WOMEN**, no more than 1 standard alcoholic drink per day, with no more than 5 alcoholic drinks per week in total.
- **FOR MEN**, no more than 1-2 standard alcoholic drinks per day, with no more than 7 alcoholic drinks per week in total.

Your age, body weight, and other health conditions will impact how you respond to alcohol. Consider drinking less alcohol than suggested or even not drinking at all; especially if you have a health condition.

If you are worried about your drinking, speak to your healthcare provider or another qualified health professional.

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