

## FALLS PREVENTION CONVERSATION TOOL

There are many steps that we can take to prevent a fall. Universal risk factors alone or in combination put everyone at risk to fall. Please see Everyone is at Risk to Fall brochure PMH1374

Universal Risk Factor	Suggested conversation
<b>History of falls</b>	<p><b>Have you fallen in the last year?</b> A fall in the last year puts you at higher risk to fall again.</p> <p><b>Have you considered getting a medical alert system?</b> Alarms can notify an operator that you require assistance and give you and your family peace of mind that help is on the way.</p>
<b>Lack of Exercise</b>	<p><b>Are you physically active? *</b> <b>Do you spend 30 minutes per day doing activities that you enjoy? *</b> Exercise can be all at once or during 10 minute intervals during the day. Your Guide to Independent Living: Home Exercise Program PMH2989</p>
<b>Impaired vision/hearing</b>	<p><b>Have you had your hearing and vision assessed within the last two years?</b> If not, schedule an appointment to have your vision and hearing assessed as soon as possible. If you use glasses or hearing aides, be sure to tell your healthcare professional and use them to lessen your risk of falls. Everyone's at Risk to Fall PMH1374</p>
<b>Impaired cognition</b>	<p><b>Have you noticed any concern related to you memory?</b> <b>Have you forgotten to use your cane or walker?</b> <b>Have you forgotten where you are or what you plan to do?</b> Cognitive impairment can increase your risk of falls. A referral for cognitive assessment may be helpful.</p>
<b>Balance and Gait deficit</b>	<p><b>Do you do any exercises that improve your strength and balance such as walking, weight lifting, or use of resistance bands?</b> There are also many everyday activities that help to improve balance such as unloading a dishwasher or gardening. Your Guide to Independent Living: Getting up from a Fall PMH2990</p>
<b>Vitamin D deficiency</b>	<p><b>Do you take Vitamin D?</b> Consider a supplement of 800-1000 IU per day. Refer to Importance of Vitamin D PMH1263. Prior to taking this vitamin discuss with your pharmacist, physician, nurse practitioner or registered dietitian.</p>
<b>Medication effects</b>	<p><b>Are you taking 3 or more medications per day?</b> <b>Are you aware of potential side effects of these medications?</b> Sometimes medications interact with each other and can increase your risk of falls. Discuss potential side effects with your primary care provider or pharmacist on your next visit. 27 things to help your patient sleep and support de-prescribing initiative PMH2899</p>
<b>Incontinence</b>	<p><b>Do you find you have to rush to get to the bathroom in time?</b> <b>Do you get up to the bathroom frequently at night?</b> Consider a regular toileting schedule, commode at bedside or night lights to improve safety.</p>

Universal Risk Factor	Suggested conversation
<b>Inadequate nutrition/hydration</b>	<p><b>Have you been losing weight?</b>  <b>Do you have difficulty eating or preparing meals?</b>            Many things can contribute to poor nutrition. If you have difficulty with swallowing, a referral to Speech Language Pathologist (PMH 745) might be indicated. If you have lost weight or are having difficulty with food and fluid in take, a referral to a registered dietitian may be indicated.            If your dentures do not fit, please see a dentist/denturist.            Community meal program might be helpful if you don't have the energy to prepare three meals per day.</p>
<b>Environmental Factors</b>	<p><b>Is your home cleared of clutter?</b>            Throw rugs should be removed or secured to prevent tripping.  <a href="https://preventfalls.ca/older-adults/home-safety-checklist/">https://preventfalls.ca/older-adults/home-safety-checklist/</a>  <b>Do you have handrails on your stairs?</b>            Be sure to use handrails to steady your balance when going up and down the stair or ramp.            Ramps and sidewalks should be cleared of snow or debris and well lit.</p>
<b>Misuse of alcohol or drugs</b>	<p><b>Have you considered the possible interactions with drug or alcohol use?</b>            Consider seeking referral to AFM, mental health services, Primary Care Provider. Discuss potential medication interactions with your primary care provider or pharmacist on your next visit.</p>
<b>Lack of safety equipment</b>	<p><b>Do you use a cane or walker?</b>            If so, make sure it is easily within reach. Tips should be in good repair. Use an ice grip attachment in winter. Equipment should be inspected periodically by a qualified person (vendor) to ensure equipment is safe.  <b>Many falls happen in the bathroom. Do you have difficulty getting up from the toilet and/or in and out of the tub?</b>            If so, a referral to Occupational Therapy or Physiotherapy (PMH745) may be indicated for recommendations for raised toilet seats, walkers, bath seat or other adaptive equipment.</p>
<b>Inappropriate footwear</b>	<p><b>Do your shoes have high heels, slippery soles or fit poorly?</b>  <b>Do you wear slippers, socks or stockings without shoes indoors and/or outdoors?</b>            Wear shoes that fit and provide good support indoors and outdoors.            Refer to Footwear Information Guide PMH1840.</p>

**Additional discussion comments:**

Staying On Your Feet –Taking Steps to Prevent Falls is an excellent resource to learn more about falls and how you can help prevent them. Visit [www.preventfalls.ca](http://www.preventfalls.ca)

*\* Before beginning any exercise program it's important to check with your Primary Care Provider to make sure it's safe and right for you.*

Many third party benefits (i.e. Employment and Income Assistance, Blue Cross, First Nations and Inuit Health Branch and Veteran's Affairs) provide coverage for interventions to prevent falls (i.e. incontinence products, vitamin D prescriptions, and equipment). Encourage the client to connect with their insurer/agency or worker to discuss benefits for coverage.

Do you have a family doctor? If not, the Manitoba Family Doctor Finder program can help you find one. Phone: 1 – 866 – 690 – 8260 or online [www.manitoba.ca/familydoctorfinder](http://www.manitoba.ca/familydoctorfinder)