

# The First Step



**Stay Active, Stay Independent and Stay On Your Feet!**



# Acknowledgements

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- Nipissing University and Canadore College collaborative 3rd year BScN students
- Stay On Your Feet Coalitions of North Bay and Parry Sound
- Older adult groups from Empire Living Centre, DeMarco's Confectionary and the North Bay Rising Stars

To request copies of this booklet or to provide comments or suggestions, contact the North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit:

North Bay: 705-474-1400  
Parry Sound: 705-746-5801  
Toll free: 1-800-563-2808

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# Introduction

Injuries from falls have been identified as the leading cause of hospital admissions due to injury in Ontario. As we age, we are particularly at risk of having a fall. One in every three people over the age of 65 will have a fall this year. A fall can cause an injury that might seriously impair your ability to live independently. In fact, 40 per cent of all nursing home admissions can be directly related to a fall. Most falls are **predictable and preventable**.

## Do you know what is putting you at risk for a fall?

Research shows that there are many risk factors linked to falls. These risks can be reduced through awareness and simple changes. This booklet will help you see what is putting you at risk and what you can do to prevent a fall. It suggests:

- **What you can do**
- **Where to go**
- **Who to phone**

### ***How to Take Your “First Step” to Prevent Yourself from Falling***

1. Answer the **“Fall Risk Questions”** on pages 3 and 4.
2. For each question answered **“Yes,”** go to the section that applies.
3. Put a check mark beside every item that applies to you.
4. Complete the **“My First Steps Plan to Prevent Falls”** on page 29.

**Take control NOW to stay on your feet.**

## Fall Risk Questions

Do you:	Circle "Yes" or "No"	If "Yes" go to page:
1. Ever feel dizzy?	Yes                  No	<b>5</b> Dizziness
2. Take three or more medications?	Yes                  No	<b>6</b> Medication Use
3. Drink alcohol frequently?	Yes                  No	<b>7</b> Alcohol Use
4. Have foot problems?	Yes                  No	<b>8</b> Foot Problems
5. Have weak muscles or stiff joints?	Yes                  No	<b>9-11</b> Muscles & Joints
6. Have to rush to the bathroom?	Yes                  No	<b>12-13</b> Bladder & Bowel Control
7. Have vision and/or hearing difficulties?	Yes                  No	<b>14-16</b> Vision & Hearing
8. Have trouble sleeping?	Yes                  No	<b>17-18</b> Sleep Difficulties

## Fall Risk Questions

Do you:	Circle “Yes” or “No”	If “Yes” go to page:
9. Experience difficulty with concentrating?	Yes                      No	<b>19-20</b> Concentration Difficulties
10. Experience shortness of breath?	Yes                      No	<b>21</b> Shortness of Breath
11. Neglect to regularly check for safety hazards in and around the home?	Yes                      No	<b>22-24</b> Safety Hazards
12. Walk in places that are uneven, slippery or icy?	Yes                      No	<b>25</b> Walking Hazards
13. Have difficulty keeping your balance?	Yes                      No	<b>26-27</b> Keeping Your Balance
14. Have frequent slips, trips, near falls or falls?	Yes                      No	<b>Please read the complete booklet and speak to your health care provider.</b>
15. Notice a recent unexpected change in your ability to function?	Yes                      No	Speak to your health care provider. You may be eligible for a referral to the North East Community Care Access Centre (see page 9 for contact information).

What Can Cause Dizziness	What You Can Do	Where to Go or Who to Phone
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Standing up quickly from a chair</li> <li>• Getting up quickly from lying down</li> <li>• Low blood pressure</li> <li>• High blood pressure</li> <li>• Medication side effects</li> <li>• Inner ear problems</li> <li>• Poor eating and drinking habits</li> </ul> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sit down immediately if you feel dizzy.</li> <li>• Discuss your symptoms with your health care provider. Some symptoms may warrant a referral to an Ear, Nose and Throat specialist.</li> <li>• Sit on the side of your bed for a few minutes before you stand up.</li> <li>• After standing, pause and take one slow deep breath before you take a step.</li> <li>• Have your blood pressure checked regularly, in both sitting and standing positions.</li> <li>• Tell your health care provider if your medication is making you drowsy or dizzy.</li> <li>• Do not go any longer than four hours without eating during the day.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask your health care provider about having your blood pressure checked.</li> <li>• <b>North Bay Regional Health Centre Outpatient Rehabilitation Services:</b> 705-495-8105</li> <li>• <b>West Parry Sound Health Centre Rehabilitation Services</b> 705-746-4540 ext. 1302 (physician referral)</li> <li>• <b>Parry Sound Active Rehabilitation</b> 705-746-7107</li> <li>• <b>EatRight Ontario</b> 1-877-510-5102 eatrightontario.ca</li> <li>• <b>Community Support Services</b> North Bay: 705-474-4250 ext. 7  West Parry Sound: 705-746-5602 1-800-883-0058  East Parry Sound: 705-724-6028 1-888-521-0000</li> </ul>

<b>What Can Cause Medication Concerns</b>	<b>What You Can Do</b>	<b>Where to Go or Who to Phone</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Taking non-prescription medications, herbal remedies, or alcohol with any medications</li> <li>• Using someone else's medications</li> <li>• Not being sure what medications you are taking, how many you should take, and why you need to take them</li> <li>• Using expired medication</li> <li>• Your health care provider not being aware of all the medications you are taking</li> <li>• Your health care provider not being aware of the side effects you have experienced</li> <li>• Taking several medications. This may increase the risk of drug interactions that can cause side effects such as dizziness.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Never borrow medication from others.</li> <li>• Keep an updated list of your medications in your wallet or purse and on the fridge.</li> <li>• Ask your doctor, nurse practitioner or pharmacist before taking any over-the-counter medications, herbal remedies or alcohol with prescription medications.</li> <li>• Review your medications with your doctor or nurse practitioner at least every six months and whenever any medication is added or stopped.</li> <li>• Ask your pharmacist about medication side effects and possible drug interactions before taking any medication.</li> <li>• Use the same pharmacy.</li> <li>• Consider using a pill organizer or have your pharmacy fill one.</li> <li>• Take outdated or unused medications to the pharmacy for disposal. Do not dispose in the toilet or garbage.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speak to your doctor, nurse practitioner, nurse or pharmacist if you have any questions or concerns about your medications.</li> <li>• Obtain a free copy of <b><i>Knowledge is the Best Medicine</i></b> booklet which includes a personal medication record. Ask your pharmacist or call the <b>North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit:</b>            North Bay: 705-474-1400            Parry Sound: 705-746-5801            Toll-free: 1-800-563-2808</li> </ul> <div> </div>

<b>What Can Cause Problems with Alcohol</b>	<b>What You Can Do</b>	<b>Where to Go or Who to Phone</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using alcohol to aid sleep (alcohol disturbs normal sleeping patterns)</li> <li>• Taking medications with alcohol</li> <li>• Using alcohol to relieve aches and pains</li> <li>• Using alcohol to cope with: loneliness, sadness or depression, grief and loss, boredom and stressful situations</li> </ul> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p><b>Low Risk Drinking Guidelines</b></p> <p><b>Women:</b> 10 drinks a week, with no more than 2 drinks a day most days</p> <p><b>Men:</b> 15 drinks a week, with no more than 3 drinks a day most days</p> <p>1 standard drink = 13.6 grams of alcohol =</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;"><b>Wine:</b> 5 oz = 142 ml</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;"><b>Spirits:</b> 1.5 oz = 43 ml</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;"><b>Beer:</b> 12 oz. = 341 ml</p> <p>Plan non-drinking days every week to avoid developing a habit.</p> <p><b>Special Occasions:</b> Reduce your risk of injury and harm by drinking no more than 3 drinks (women) and 4 drinks (men) on any single occasion. Plan to drink in a safe environment.</p> <p style="font-size: small; text-align: center;">© Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse 2013</p> </div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be aware of your alcohol intake.</li> <li>• Measure your drinks - know what a standard drink is (see chart).</li> <li>• Drink less than what is recommended in the low risk drinking guidelines (see chart).</li> <li>• Learn how your body responds differently to alcohol with age.</li> <li>• Share your feelings with someone you trust such as a family member, friend or seniors' peer counsellor.</li> <li>• If you are feeling sad or nervous, do not feel like eating or start losing interest in your activities, talk with your doctor, a nurse or a counsellor.</li> <li>• Join a community group or activity.</li> <li>• Talk with organizations or groups that are trained to counsel on alcohol misuse.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss with your health care provider.</li> <li>• <b>Community Counselling Centre of Nipissing</b> 705-472-6515</li> <li>• <b>Addiction Outreach - Muskoka Parry Sound</b> 705-746-7113 1-800-668-5192 aomps.com</li> <li>• <b>Parry Sound Family Services &amp; Counselling</b> 705-746-9789 psfamilyservice.com</li> <li>• <b>Nipissing Detox &amp; Substance Abuse Programs</b> 705-476-6240</li> <li>• <b>Alcoholics Anonymous</b> Nipissing 705-474-7940 Parry Sound: 705-746-2464</li> <li>• Bereavement services: refer to local Yellow Pages.</li> </ul>

<h2 style="text-align: center;">What Can Cause Foot Problems</h2>	<h2 style="text-align: center;">What You Can Do</h2>	<h2 style="text-align: center;">Where to Go or Who to Phone</h2>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poorly fitting shoes, slippers or boots</li> <li>• Shoes with high narrow heels, slippery soles, “sticky” soles or poor support</li> <li>• Swollen feet</li> <li>• Untreated foot problems like calluses, bunions, corns, untrimmed toenails or ingrown toenails</li> <li>• Poor posture</li> <li>• Conditions, such as diabetes and poor circulation, can cause loss of feeling or pain in your feet</li> </ul> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wear proper fitting, supportive shoes with low, broad heels.</li> <li>• Make sure your footwear is in good repair.</li> <li>• Talk with a foot specialist about calluses, bunions, corns or ingrown toenails. Corn plasters are not recommended for people with diabetes, heart or blood vessel disease.</li> <li>• If your shoes are loose and you can’t afford a new pair, buy insoles or wear extra socks.</li> <li>• DO NOT wear socks on linoleum or tiled flooring.</li> <li>• Buy slippers that fit properly, are enclosed around the heels and have non-slip soles.</li> <li>• Wear loose socks or stockings. Knee highs can cut off circulation in your legs and numb your feet.</li> <li>• If your feet are swollen, put them up when sitting or lying down.</li> <li>• See a professional footcare specialist every 4-6 weeks for toenail cutting if you can’t do it yourself</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talk with your doctor, pharmacist or a podiatrist.</li> <li>• <b>Diabetes Education Centre of Parry Sound and Area Communities</b> 705-746-5461</li> <li>• <b>Diabetes Centre of Nipissing District</b> North Bay: 705-472-6111 Sturgeon Falls: 705-753-3110 ext. 247 Mattawa: 705-744-5511 ext. 2234</li> <li>• <b>Canadian Diabetes Association</b> 1-800-226-8464 ext. 1 diabetes.ca</li> </ul>

<b>What Can Cause Weak Muscles &amp; Stiff Joints</b>	<b>What You Can Do</b>	<b>Where to Go or Who to Phone</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acute or prolonged illness</li> <li>• Lack of physical activity, including not walking, or sitting for long periods of time</li> <li>• Unresolved injury, pain or discomfort</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talk with your health care provider before beginning a new physical activity or program.</li> <li>• Plan regular physical activity and gradually increase it.</li> <li>• Join an exercise or fitness program, appropriate to your fitness needs and level.</li> <li>• Join a specialized program designed to help those with conditions such as osteoporosis.</li> <li>• See a physiotherapist or kinesiologist for specialized exercises.</li> <li>• Contact local support groups.</li> </ul> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If you think you need a cane, walker or wheelchair, ask your health care provider for a referral to a physiotherapist or occupational therapist.</li> <li>• Handicapped parking vehicle permit - look in the Blue Pages under Drivers and Vehicles for your local Driver and License Issuing Office.</li> <li>• <b>North East Community Care Access Centre</b>   North Bay:  705-476-2222  1-888-533-2222   Parry Sound:  705-773-4602  1-800-440-6762   310-CCAC (2222) for English  310-CASC (2272) for French   healthcareathome.ca </li> </ul>

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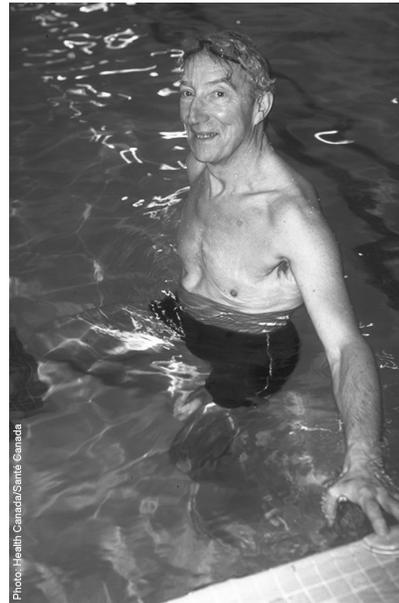
<h2>What Can Cause Weak Muscles &amp; Stiff Joints</h2>	<h2>What You Can Do</h2>	<h2>Where to Go or Who to Phone</h2>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conditions affecting the muscles and joints such as arthritis, osteoporosis, Parkinson's, stroke and some neurological conditions</li> <li>• Tight muscles</li> <li>• Overdoing physical exercise without building up to it</li> </ul> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talk to your doctor, nurse practitioner, nurse, occupational therapist or physiotherapist about your discomfort, pain or soreness.</li> <li>• Write all the information down before visiting your healthcare provider. Make sure to include what it feels like when it occurs, what makes it worse and what relieves it.</li> </ul> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Arthritis Society</b> North Bay: 705-474-2350  Parry Sound/Muskoka: 705-645-8548  Info Line: 1-800-321-1433 arthritis.ca</li> <li>• <b>The Parkinson Society of Canada</b> 1-800-565-3000 parkinson.ca</li> <li>• <b>The Heart and Stroke Foundation</b> North Bay: 705-476-6196 Parry Sound: 705-737-1020 1-888-473-4636 heartandstroke.on.ca</li> <li>• <b>Parry Sound Active Rehabilitation</b> 705-746-7107</li> <li>• <b>West Parry Sound Health Centre Rehabilitation Services</b> 705-746-4540 ext. 1302</li> <li>• <b>North Bay Regional Health Centre Outpatient Rehabilitation Services: 705-495-8105</b></li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>continued on next page</i></p>

## What Can Cause Weak Muscles & Stiff Joints

## What You Can Do

## Where to Go or Who to Phone

- Continued from pages 9 and 10.



- Living Fit Inside/Out** (women only)  
705-495-4045  
livingfitinsideout.com
- Golden Age Club**  
705-474-6520  
northbaygoldenageclub.com
- For more activity information, look in your city's leisure guide, in the phone book or contact the **North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit**  
North Bay: 705-474-1400  
Parry Sound: 705-746-5801  
Toll-free: 1-800-563-2808
- YMCA**  
North Bay: 705-497-9622  
Parry Sound: 705-746-0511  
ymcaofsimcoemuskoa.ca  
ymcanorthbay.com
- To obtain a free copy of *the Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines for Older Adults*, call the **Health Unit** at:  
North Bay: 705-474-1400  
Parry Sound: 705-746-5801  
Toll-free: 1-800-563-2808

<b>What Can Cause Changes in Bladder &amp; Bowel Control</b>	<b>What You Can Do</b>	<b>Where to Go or Who to Phone</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weakness of muscles controlling urine flow</li> <li>• Recent changes in your normal eating and drinking routine</li> <li>• Side effects of medications</li> <li>• Infection</li> <li>• Prostate problems</li> <li>• Constipation which can contribute to bladder problems</li> <li>• Caffeine and alcohol which irritate the bladder</li> <li>• Not drinking enough fluid can irritate the bladder</li> <li>• Difficulty getting to the bathroom on time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talk to your health care provider.</li> <li>• Go to the bathroom before going to bed.</li> <li>• Limit or avoid beverages that contain caffeine like coffee, tea or cola.</li> <li>• To avoid constipation: eat a high fibre diet (vegetables, fruit, whole grains, legumes), drink plenty of fluids and exercise regularly.</li> <li>• Drink enough fluids so that your urine is light yellow in colour. Not drinking enough fluids may cause irritation to the bladder and a urinary tract infection.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talk with your health care care provider about resources available in your area.</li> <li>• <b>Canadian Continence Foundation</b> 1-800-265-9575 <a href="http://www.canadiancontinence.ca">www.canadiancontinence.ca</a></li> <li>• <b>EatRight Ontario</b> 1-877-510-5102 <a href="http://eatrightontario.ca">eatrightontario.ca</a></li> <li>• Refer to Yellow Pages under “Pharmacies” or “Hospital Equipment &amp; Supplies” for incontinence products.</li> </ul>

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What Can Cause Changes in Bladder & Bowel Control	What You Can Do	Where to Go or Who to Phone
 <p><i>MYTH: Along with aging comes loss of bladder and bowel control.</i></p> <p><i>FACT: Loss of bladder or bowel control is not a normal part of aging.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talk to your doctor, nurse or physiotherapist about treatment and exercises, such as Kegel exercises to strengthen the muscles that control urine flow.</li> <li>• See your health care provider about any changes in bladder or bowel control. Tell your primary care provider about any blood in your urine, foul smelling urine, difficulty or pain urinating, urinary frequency, difficulty getting to the bathroom on time, constipation or diarrhea.</li> <li>• Install a properly secured grab bar by the toilet. Do not use towel rack or toilet tissue holder for balance and support.</li> <li>• Turn on a nightlight before going to bed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See page 12</li> </ul>

What Can Cause Vision Difficulties	What You Can Do	Where to Go or Who to Phone
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dirty or scratched eye glasses</li> <li>• Eyes that become sensitive to glaring light with age</li> <li>• Outdated prescription for glasses</li> <li>• Getting used to wearing bifocals</li> <li>• Low lighting, causing eye strain</li> <li>• Diseases of the eye such as cataracts, glaucoma, infections, or age-related macular degeneration</li> <li>• Diseases that affect eyesight, such as diabetes</li> <li>• Some medications may affect your vision</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clean glasses regularly. Use a non-glare cleaner and soft cloth.</li> <li>• Wear sunglasses when in the sun.</li> <li>• Pause and give your eyes time to adapt to changes in light.</li> <li>• Use good lighting and colour contrast in halls, stairways, and bathrooms.</li> <li>• Use nightlights.</li> <li>• Maintain good diabetic control.</li> <li>• Bifocals: do not look through lower part of glasses when going up or down stairs. Tilt your head down to use upper part of glasses.</li> <li>• Remove reading glasses when walking.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Call your Optometrist or Ophthalmologist. Both are covered by OHIP for a yearly eye exam if you are over 65 years of age. You will need a referral from your doctor for an Ophthalmologist.</li> <li>• <b>Canadian National Institute for the Blind</b> provides information, rehabilitation, support and devices for people who are blind or visually impaired. 1-888-675-2468 cnib.ca</li> <li>• <b>Diabetes Education Centre of Parry Sound and Area Communities</b> 705-746-5461</li> <li>• <b>Canadian Diabetes Association</b> 1-800-226-8464 ext. 1 diabetes.ca</li> </ul>

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<b>What Can Cause Vision Difficulties</b>	<b>What You Can Do</b>	<b>Where to Go or Who to Phone</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continued from page 14</li> </ul> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have vision checked at the optometrist or ophthalmologist once a year.</li> <li>Remove clutter from walkways.</li> <li>Make sure rugs are non-skid.</li> <li>Make sure electrical cords are taped down.</li> <li>Stairways: mark the edge of each step with brightly coloured tape or paint.</li> <li>When carrying packages, don't block your view, and keep one hand free to help with balance.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Diabetes Centre of Nipissing District</b>  North Bay:  705-472-6111  Sturgeon Falls:  705-753-3110 ext. 247  Mattawa:  705-744-5511 ext. 2234</li> </ul>

What Can Cause Hearing Difficulties	What You Can Do	Where to Go or Who to Phone
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wax build up in the ear</li> <li>• Dirty hearing aids</li> <li>• Old batteries in hearing aids</li> <li>• Hearing aids that are no longer appropriate for your hearing loss</li> <li>• Inner ear problems</li> <li>• Conditions such as Tinnitus (ringing or buzzing in the ears) or Ménière's disease</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If you think you have a wax build up in your ear, talk to your health care provider.</li> <li>• Talk to your health care provider if you experience a decrease in your hearing. You may need to be referred to an Ear, Nose and Throat Specialist or an Audiologist who will assess your hearing.</li> <li>• Learn the proper care for your hearing aid.</li> <li>• Clean your hearing aids often and check batteries regularly.</li> <li>• In a public place, try to sit in a corner to reduce excess noise.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Canadian Hearing Society</b> 705-474-8090 chs.ca</li> <li>• Relay Services enable the hearing community to communicate with the hard of hearing  <b>Rogers Relay Service:</b> For TTY to Voice dial 711 For Voice to TTY dial 1-800-855-0511 For TTY to TTY dial 1-800-855-1155  <b>Bell Relay Service:</b> Hearing impaired customers dial: 1-888-735-2921 For TTY to Voice dial 711 Hearing customers dial: 1-800-855-0511</li> <li>• <b>Assistive Devices Program</b> 1-800-268-6021</li> <li>• Refer to your local Yellow Pages to find an audiologist or hearing clinic in your area.</li> </ul>

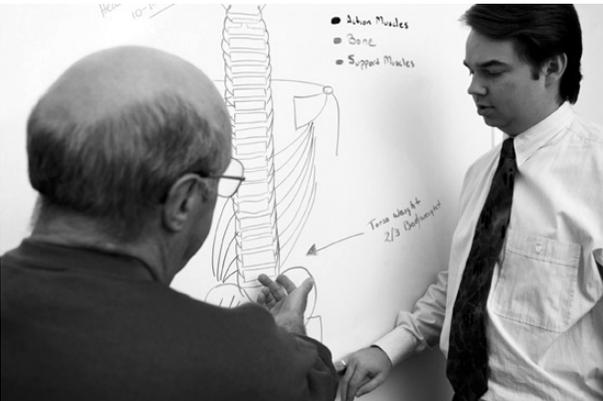
What Can Cause Difficulties with Sleeping	What You Can Do	Where to Go or Who to Phone
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of physical activity</li> <li>• Poor sleeping environment</li> <li>• Lack of sunlight during the day</li> <li>• Caffeine, i.e. coffee, tea, cola or chocolate, in the evening</li> <li>• Napping in the late afternoon and early evening</li> <li>• Stress</li> <li>• Feeling nervous, anxious or worried</li> <li>• Sadness or depression</li> <li>• Medication and alcohol use</li> <li>• Needing to go to the bathroom frequently</li> <li>• Eating a heavy meal before bedtime</li> <li>• Exercising too close to bedtime</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If you can't sleep within 20 to 40 minutes after going to bed, get up and do something like reading a book or listening to music.</li> <li>• Go to bed and wake up at the same time every day.</li> <li>• Avoid food and drinks with caffeine and alcohol before going to bed. Try warm milk instead.</li> <li>• Do not nap in late afternoon or early evening.</li> <li>• Keep bedroom cool and quiet.</li> <li>• Ensure mattress is firm and comfortable.</li> <li>• Learn relaxation techniques.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talk to your doctor, nurse or pharmacist.</li> <li>• Talk to your health care provider about a referral to a sleep disorder clinic.</li> <li>• <b>Diagnostic Sleep Clinic</b>  North Bay:  705-472-1967   Parry Sound:  705-746-4540 ext. 3306</li> </ul>

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<b>What Can Cause Difficulties with Sleeping</b>	<b>What You Can Do</b>	<b>Where to Go or Who to Phone</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Age-related intolerance to sleeping pills</li> <li>• Aches and pains</li> <li>• Grief and loss</li> <li>• Shortness of breath when lying on your back, flat in bed</li> <li>• Sleep Apnea, a condition where breathing stops during sleep, can cause excessive snoring and make you feel sleepy all the time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incorporate physical activity into the earlier part of your day (see pages 9 to 11).</li> <li>• Limit alcohol, as it reduces the amount of restful sleep you get.</li> <li>• Talk with someone you trust about feeling anxious or sad.</li> <li>• Use pillows to prop you up in bed to help you breathe better.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See page 17</li> </ul>

<b>What Can Cause Difficulties with Concentration</b>	<b>What You Can Do</b>	<b>Where to Go or Who to Phone</b>
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chronic or acute pain</li> <li>• Continually feeling rushed or stressed</li> <li>• Fear of falling</li> <li>• Poor appetite or not eating a well-balanced diet</li> <li>• Feeling nervous or anxious</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slow down, plan ahead, rest when tired, always give yourself more time to get to places or get things done.</li> <li>• Stay active both physically and mentally.</li> <li>• Eat regularly to prevent physical weakness and mental sluggishness. Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide recommends eating three meals every day and two to three snacks per day from a variety of food groups.</li> <li>• Write down activities that need to be done during the day. In order to remind yourself of these activities you may want to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Post a list in the same place, such as on the fridge or near the phone.</li> <li>2. Keep a journal.</li> <li>3. Use a calendar with large spaces.</li> </ol> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talk to your health care provider about options for treatment and counselling.</li> <li>• <b>Mental Health Helpline</b> 1-866-531-2600 mentalhealthhelpline.ca</li> <li>• <b>Muskoka Parry Sound Community Mental Health Addiction Outreach</b> Parry Sound: 705-746-4264 or 1-866-829-7049 Sundridge: 705-384-5392 or 1-866-829-7050  Aboriginal Mental Health Parry Sound: 705-746-2512  Parry Sound, Sundridge and area crisis line: 1-800-461-5424  mpscmhs.on.ca</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>continued on next page</i></p>

What Can Cause Difficulties with Concentration	What You Can Do	Where to Go or Who to Phone
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feeling sad, lonely or depressed</li> <li>• Worrying about poor memory or memory gaps</li> <li>• Grief and loss</li> <li>• Medications (e.g. sleeping pills or pills for anxiety)</li> <li>• Not keeping mentally active</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talk with your health care provider about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- loss of appetite</li> <li>- loss of interest in activities</li> <li>- difficulty sleeping</li> <li>- sleeping too much</li> <li>- discomfort</li> <li>- difficulty in remembering things</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Mental exercise aerobics, such as playing games, doing puzzles, crosswords or word search puzzles, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Community Counselling Centre of Nipissing</b> 705-472-6515 cccnip.com</li> <li>• <b>Canadian Mental Health Association</b> North Bay: 705-474-1299 1-888-474-1299 cmhanipissing.on.ca</li> <li>• <b>Alzheimer Society</b> Parry Sound: 705-645-5621 1-800-605-2075 North Bay &amp; District: 705-495-4342 alzheimernorthbay.com</li> <li>• <b>Victorian Order of Nurses (VON)</b> North Bay: 705-472-8050 Muskoka/Parry Sound: 705-746-9299 1-800-265-5379</li> </ul>

What Can Cause Shortness of Breath	What You Can Do	Where to Go or Who to Phone
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Smoking</li> <li>• Lack of physical activity</li> <li>• Obesity</li> <li>• Pollution</li> <li>• Lung infections or chronic diseases such as asthma, bronchitis and emphysema</li> <li>• Allergies</li> <li>• Heart problems such as congestive heart failure</li> </ul> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talk with your health care provider about shortness of breath. Be prepared to discuss when it happens and how it limits your activities.</li> <li>• Talk with your health care provider about learning to balance your activity with rest and ways to conserve energy.</li> <li>• Get your annual flu shot and the one-time only pneumonia vaccine to prevent severe respiratory infections.</li> <li>• Cut down or stop smoking with help from family, friends, or education and support programs.</li> <li>• Try to stay away from places where air is polluted (such as smoking areas).</li> <li>• Try to limit your outdoor activities during a poor air quality warning.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Lung Association</b> 1-888-344-5864 (LUNG) on.lung.ca</li> <li>• <b>Smokers' Helpline</b> 1-877-513-5333 smokershelpline.ca</li> </ul>

What Can Be Hazardous In and Around the Home	What You Can Do	Where to Go or Who to Phone
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rushing or inattentiveness</li> <li>• Slippery bathtubs, wet floors or walkways</li> <li>• Poor lighting</li> <li>• Clutter (phone or electrical cords, shoes, pet dishes, papers, etc.)</li> <li>• Chairs and toilet seats which are too low and hard to get up from</li> <li>• Climbing on chairs or stools</li> <li>• Loose carpets, scatter rugs</li> <li>• Poor furniture arrangement, i.e. not enough space if using walking aids</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use skid-proof or non-slip mats in bathrooms, especially in bathtub.</li> <li>• Remove all loose carpets.</li> <li>• Install handrails for all stairs inside and outside the house, and grab bars in the bathroom.</li> <li>• Use non-slip wax on floors.</li> <li>• Wipe up spills promptly.</li> <li>• Fix or mark uneven floors with brightly coloured tape or paint.</li> <li>• Keep a nightlight on near the bathroom, bed and hallways.</li> <li>• Use non glare bulbs and wattage as recommended.</li> <li>• Purchase a cordless phone to carry with you.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have a family member or handyman tack down carpets, reroute electrical cords or install handrails.</li> <li>• <b>Canada Mortgage &amp; Housing Home Adaptations for Seniors' Independence:</b> 1-800-668-2642</li> <li>• <b>March of Dimes Canada Home and Vehicle Modification Program:</b> 1-877-369-4867 <a href="http://www.marchofdimes.ca">www.marchofdimes.ca</a></li> <li>• <b>Veterans Affairs Canada</b> offers services and benefits to qualified veterans, their dependents or survivors, i.e. therapy assessment and treatment, transportation, home adaptations, medical equipment and grounds keeping. 1-866-522-2122 (English) 1-866-522-2022 (French) <a href="http://www.veterans.gc.ca">www.veterans.gc.ca</a></li> </ul>

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<b>What Can Be Hazardous In and Around the Home</b>	<b>What You Can Do</b>	<b>Where to Go or Who to Phone</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continued from page 22</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Store heavy objects on lower shelves.</li> <li>Ask an occupational therapist or physiotherapist about having your favourite chair raised slightly on a platform.</li> <li>Install a raised toilet seat.</li> <li>Install grab bars where needed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You may be eligible for a therapist to assess you in your home for safety. Call the <b>North East Community Care Access Centre</b> at:   North Bay:  705-476-2222  1-888-533-2222   Parry Sound:  705-773-4602  1-800-440-6762  310-CCAC (2222) for English  310-CASC (2272) for French   ccac-ont.ca  healthcareathome.ca/northeast/en</li> <li><b>Canadian Red Cross Health Services Health Equipment Loan Programs:</b>  North Bay:  705-472-5760   redcross.ca</li> </ul>

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What Can Be Hazardous in and Around the Home	What You Can Do	Where to Go or Who to Phone
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reaching for high objects</li> <li>• Bending over to reach low objects</li> <li>• Stairs and bathrooms without secure handholds</li> <li>• Clothing that is too long and can trip you, such as nightgowns, dressing gowns and long pant legs</li> <li>• Floppy, ill-fitting slippers, e.g. crocheted slippers</li> <li>• Pets that you can potentially trip over</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep all walkways clear of clutter.</li> <li>• Tack down all carpets. Remove scatter rugs.</li> <li>• Do not stand on a ladder, chair or stool. Store items on easy to reach shelves, counter level or below shoulder height.</li> <li>• Buy a long handled “reacher” at medical supply store.</li> <li>• Take your time, especially when carrying objects.</li> <li>• Change arrangement of your furniture to open up the space. This is especially important if using walking aids.</li> <li>• Be aware of sleeping pets.</li> <li>• Have grab bars properly installed to assist in getting up.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Arthritis Society</b> North Bay: 705-474-2350  Parry Sound/Muskoka: 705-645-8548 Arthritis Information Line: 1-800-321-1433 arthritis.ca</li> <li>• <b>North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit</b> North Bay: 705-474-1400 Parry Sound: 705-746-5801 Toll free: 1-800-563-2808</li> <li>• Medical suppliers have safety equipment for your home. Check the Yellow Pages under “Home Health Services and Supplies” or “Hospital Equipment and Supplies.”</li> </ul>

What Can Be Hazardous Outdoors	What You Can Do	Where to Go or Who to Phone
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rushing or poor concentration</li> <li>• Carrying too much which can cause a loss of balance or block vision</li> <li>• Uneven ground</li> <li>• Wet leaves or fallen branches</li> <li>• Snow, ice or water puddles</li> <li>• Raised, cracked sidewalks</li> <li>• Improper footwear for the type of weather</li> <li>• Getting on and off buses</li> <li>• Poor outdoor lighting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Try to avoid walking on wet leaves, snow or ice.</li> <li>• Walk slowly and pay attention.</li> <li>• Use walking aids as ordered for you by a health professional.</li> <li>• Keep your centre of gravity over your feet: avoid reaching or twisting when walking and standing. Keep one hand free for your balance.</li> <li>• Use a waist belt pack or backpack instead of carrying a purse.</li> <li>• Avoid carrying heavy items. Use a delivery service or a portable folding cart.</li> <li>• Install automatic or timed lighting outside.</li> </ul>	

<h2 style="text-align: center;">What Can Affect Your Balance</h2>	<h2 style="text-align: center;">What You Can Do</h2>	<h2 style="text-align: center;">Where to Go or Who to Phone</h2>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Getting up too quickly</li> <li>• Lack of physical activity</li> <li>• Poor vision</li> <li>• Alcohol and/or medication misuse</li> <li>• Poor footwear</li> <li>• Not using the correct walking aids</li> <li>• Lack of sleep</li> <li>• Not eating enough</li> <li>• Medical conditions that affect how your muscles or nerves react</li> </ul> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make sure to include physical activity in your day.</li> <li>• Try tai chi, which has been shown to improve balance.</li> <li>• Take your time.</li> <li>• See pages 9 to 11 in this booklet.</li> <li>• Wear proper fitting footwear.</li> <li>• Avoid alcohol.</li> <li>• Use recommended walking aids.</li> <li>• Gradually increase your walking.</li> <li>• Eat regular, well-balanced meals to give yourself energy. Canada's Food Guide recommends eating three meals per day and two to three snacks per day from a variety of food groups.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss your balance problems with your health care provider.</li> <li>• Physiotherapy clinics are listed in the Yellow Pages. You may wish to discuss this with your healthcare provider.</li> <li>• Local medical suppliers have walking aids in their showrooms. You should be assessed by a therapist before purchasing.</li> <li>• Government funding for mobility devices (ie. speciality canes, walkers, wheelchairs) may be available to you through the <b>Assistive Devices Program (ADP)</b>. Assessment by an ADP registered therapist is required. 1-800-268-6021</li> </ul>

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<h2>What Can Affect Your Balance</h2>	<h2>What You Can Do</h2>	<h2>Where to Go or Who to Phone</h2>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medical conditions that affect your inner ear</li> <li>• Medical conditions that affect one or more of your senses (hearing, sight, touch, smell, taste)</li> </ul> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use corrective lenses for poor vision</li> <li>• Talk with support groups such as the Canadian Diabetes Association</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Diabetes Education Centre of Parry Sound and Area Communities</b> 705-746-5461</li> <li>• <b>Diabetes Centre of Nipissing District</b> North Bay: 705-472-6111 Sturgeon Falls: 705-753-3110 ext. 247 Mattawa: 705-744-5511 ext. 2234</li> <li>• <b>Canadian Diabetes Association</b> 1-800-226-8464 ext. 1 diabetes.ca</li> </ul>

# Talking to Your Health Care Provider About Your Concerns

Falling, slipping and tripping are not normal. You need to find out why this is happening and how to protect yourself. You know yourself best, so you need to be able to clearly tell your doctor or nurse practitioner about your concerns. Trust and comfort are essential for good medical care. You can do your part by following the suggestions as listed below.

- List your concerns on paper in order of “what is most important” before going to the doctor’s office.
- Make sure you understand what you are asking for help with. Be clear.
- When making your appointment, tell the receptionist if you think you will need a longer time to speak about your concerns.
- If you are not clear about the medical treatment plan, (e.g. tests, medications, therapists) ask that it be written down or restated. It is normal to forget or miss something you are told because you may be feeling stressed at the time. Take a friend or translator.
- Don’t be afraid to speak up for yourself. Say if “the plan” or “treatment” is not working. Don’t think that “maybe it will work eventually.”
- Keep a diary of medications and concerns, and take this with you.
- Ask for resources, such as brochures or videos.
- Do not stop any medication without consulting a doctor or nurse practitioner.
- If you do not hear well or have difficulty understanding information, take someone with you to your appointments.



# My “First Steps” Plan to Prevent Falls (review periodically)

My greatest risk(s):	I will do:	I have done:	Resources I might use:
<p><i>Example</i></p> <p>1. Getting in and out of the tub</p>	<p><i>Look for non-slip mats for in and out of tub.</i></p> <p><i>Talk to my doctor about my dizziness.</i></p> <p><i>Find out more about grab bars</i></p>	<p><i>I asked Jane to come with me to look for bath mats &amp; grab bars</i></p>	<p><i>My daughter, Jane</i></p> <p><i>Dr. Smith</i></p> <p><i>Health-care store staff</i></p>
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			

# Other Seniors' Community Services in Nipissing & Parry Sound

## **Alzheimer Society**

North Bay & District: 705-495-4342  
alzheimernorthbay.com

## **Canadian Diabetes Association**

1-800-226-8464 ext. 1  
diabetes.ca

## **Canadian Red Cross**

North Bay: 705-472-5760  
redcross.ca

## **Community Support Services**

North Bay: 705-474-4250 ext. 238  
West Parry Sound: 705-746-5602 or 1-800-883-0058  
East Parry Sound: 705-724-6028 or 1-888-521-0000

## **Diabetes Centre of Nipissing District**

North Bay: 705-472-6111  
Sturgeon Falls: 705-753-3110 ext. 247  
Mattawa: 705-744-5511 ext. 2234

## **Diabetes Education Centre of Parry Sound and Area Communities**

705-746-5461

# Other Seniors' Community Services in Nipissing and Parry Sound

## **Metis Long-Term Care Program**

North Bay: 705-474-2593

## **North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit**

North Bay: 705-474-1400

Parry Sound: 705-746-5801

1-800-563-2808

## **North East Community Care Access Centre**

North Bay: 705-476-2222 or 1-888-533-2222

Parry Sound: 705-773-4602 or 1-800-440-6762

310-CCAC (2222) for English

310-CASC (2272) for French

[ccac-ont.ca](http://ccac-ont.ca)

[northeasthealthline.ca](http://northeasthealthline.ca)

## **Physically Handicapped Adult Rehabilitation Association**

North Bay: 705-476-0733

## **The FRIENDS**

East/West Parry Sound & Muskoka: 705-746-5102 or 1-888-746-5102

[thefriends.on.ca](http://thefriends.on.ca)

## After A Fall

- Seeking medical attention and evaluation is very important after a fall, even if you think you are not injured. It can reduce your chance of hospitalization, help to find the cause of your fall and prevent another one.
- If there is an obvious injury, you should get medical assistance **immediately** and notify your healthcare provider. Call 9-1-1 or use your medical or personal alarm.
- Even if you don't have an obvious injury, if you had a significant blow to the head or any loss of consciousness, you will need immediate medical attention.
- Even if there is no apparent injury, falling could be related to other medical conditions and should be reported to your healthcare provider right away.

## What You Can Do to Help Yourself

- Medical and personal alarms - refer to "Medical Alarms" in the Yellow Pages.
- Refer to "What To Do If You Fall" on page 33.

# What To Do If You Fall

1. Rest. Falling is a shock.
2. Think about your next move.

## If You Are Injured

### 1. Attract Attention

- Use your medical or personal alarm.
- Try to shuffle to the phone. Call 911 and stay on the line.
- Bang on the wall or floor or use an item to wave at the window.
- Shout for help.

### 2. Keep Warm

- Use anything that is near: bedding, a coat or tablecloth to cover up.

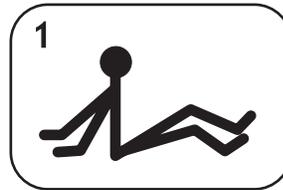
### 3. Keep Moving

- Gently move your feet and hands to help circulation and reduce pressure areas.

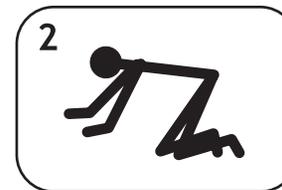
### 4. Bladder Control

- If your bladder “lets go” while on the floor, move away from the damp area to keep warm.

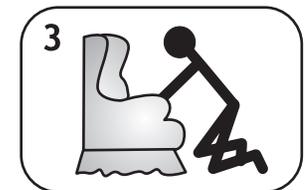
## If You Can Get Up



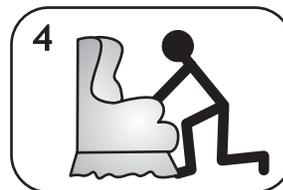
Roll onto your side. Push up into sitting position.



Turn onto your hands and knees. Crawl to the nearest suitable furniture. e.g. bed, chair, sturdy stool.



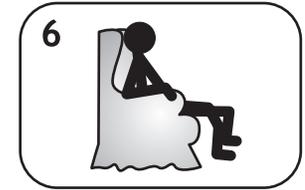
Place your hands on the surface.



Place one foot flat on the floor.



Lean forward and push up onto the forward leg and into standing position.



Sit. Rest. Tell someone you have fallen and follow up with your physician.

Supported by: / Financé par :



**Ontario**

North East Local Health  
Integration Network

Réseau local d'intégration  
des services de santé  
du Nord-Est



North Bay Parry Sound District  
**Health Unit**