

MEDIA RELEASE

New Year's Resolutions To Help You Stay On Your Feet

January 2, 2019 Statistics show that one in three Canadian adults aged 65 and older will experience at least one fall each year. Fortunately, most falls are preventable with the right mix of healthy lifestyle choices and precautions. With a new year upon us our **Stay On Your Feet** strategy will continue to help older adults put their best foot forward in 2019.

Stay On Your Feet is Northeastern Ontario's falls prevention strategy, delivered in partnership by the North East Local Health Integration Network (North East LHIN) and the region's five public health units.

"The North East LHIN values its partnership with the region's five public health units. Through our collaborative efforts, the Stay on Your Feet program is helping older adults live safely and independently in their setting of choice for as long as possible," said Jeremy Stevenson, Chief Executive Officer of the North East LHIN.

Here are five tips to help older adults stay active, independent and on their feet.

Exercise

Staying active and [exercising regularly](#) is considered the best way to reduce the risk of a fall. Regular physical activity has many health benefits and also helps to improve balance, which is a key aspect of preventing falls. Adults aged 65+ should strive for at least 150 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous aerobic exercise per week, in sessions of 10 minutes or longer. Older adults are also encouraged to perform strength training activities at least twice a week as they help to keep bones and muscles strong. Free exercise classes are available throughout the North East LHIN. A [schedule of classes](#) is available on our website at www.nelhin.on.ca.



Above: Participants get active in a group exercise class held at the Victorian Order of Nurses' Adult Day Program in Sault Ste. Marie.

Eat Well

Similar to exercise, [eating well](#) can improve all-around health and reduce the risk of a fall. Eating regular, nutritious meals reduces the chance of becoming dizzy or light-headed. Tips for eating well include: protein-rich foods throughout the day to maintain muscle strength; adequate calcium to keep bones strong and prevent osteoporosis; ample fruits and vegetables; and plenty of water to stay hydrated.

Manage Medications

Medications play an important role in maintaining good health, but some can also increase [your risk of a fall](#). It's important to keep an up-to-date list of all medications, including over-the-counter products, vitamins and herbal remedies. This list should be reviewed with your health care providers and pharmacist every six to 12 months. Take medications only as directed and consult your provider or pharmacist before stopping or starting any medication. If you have old, unused, unlabelled or expired medications that need to be disposed of, contact your local Public Health Unit for a medication clean-out bag.

Foot Care and Safe Footwear

Take care of your feet and wear safe footwear, especially during the winter months. It's a good idea to see a foot specialist once per year to have your feet checked and any common foot problems addressed. Washing and drying your feet well can also help prevent foot problems from developing. Look for shoes that fit properly, have a firm sole with a good grip, and lots of contact with the ground for stability. Shoes that are excessively worn, loose, or heavy are more likely to put you at risk of a fall. Shoes with laces or Velcro are also preferable to slip-on shoes.

Eliminate Hazards That Can Cause Falls

Where possible, removing hazards is another way to lessen the chance of falls. Common interior hazards include slippery floors, pets and their toys, unsecured electrical cords, and carpeted stairs that lack contrast, which can make their edges difficult to see. Outside, hazards can include poorly lit stairs, uneven footpaths, and snow and ice during winter months. To make it easier to identify and reduce the risk posed by hazards around the home, **Stay On Your Feet** has a Home Safety Checklist available that can be [downloaded from](#) our website (nelhin.on.ca/stayonyourfeet) or you can request a copy from your local Public Health Unit.

For more information on falls prevention information and the Stay On Your Feet strategy, please visit: nelhin.on.ca/stayonyourfeet or call your local Public Health Unit.

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