



Maintaining Independence in Older Adults

July 2017

Falls are a problem

One in three older adults 65 years of age and over fall each year. Falls are the main reason older adults lose their independence. Most falls are predictable and preventable, and are often the result of health or lifestyle factors.

Fifty percent of falls occur in and around the older adult's home, making their environment a modifiable risk factor. Home safety and home hazard reduction is one component of a multifactorial approach to falls prevention. There is good evidence to support the modification of environmental hazards as a strategy for reducing falls. Modifications in the home have been shown to reduce falls requiring medical attention by 55% over 24 months.

The SOYF Regional Fall Prevention strategy is a partnership between the North East Local Health Integration Network (NE LHIN), the five north east public health units (NE PHU) and community partners. With their local Falls Prevention Coalitions, they work together helping older adults stay active, stay independent and stay on their feet.

Things you can do for your clients

Home safety

Provide your clients with a copy of the Home Safety Checklist, which is available through each of the 5 NE PHUs. The checklist helps to identify, modify and remove hazards in and around their home.

Tell your clients about the 9 steps to prevent falls

1. Be active
2. Walk tall
3. Improve your balance
4. Foot care and safe footwear
5. Manage your health
6. Manage your medications
7. Regularly check your eyesight and hearing
8. Eat well for life
9. Identify, remove and report hazards

Order SOYF resources and learn more

The 5 NE PHUs offer a variety of free resources you can place in your office for older adults and caregivers. Choose from an assortment of SOYF brochures, checklists, rack cards or fact sheets.

To learn more about the 9 steps to prevent falls, local falls prevention programs or to order resources, advise your clients to call their local public health unit:

- Algoma district – call Helen Kwolek, Public Health Nurse, 1-866-892-0172
- North Bay and Parry Sound districts – call Joanna Han, Community Health Promoter, 1-800-563-2808 ext. 3222
- Cochrane district – call Patrick Nowak, Public Health Nurse, 1-800-461-1818
- Sudbury & District – call Sabrina Kalvaninen, Public Health Nurse, 1-855-674-4330
- Timsikaming district – call Lorna Desmarais, Public Health Promoter, 1-866-747-4305, ext. 2239



Age Friendly Committee Working Hard in Timmins

July 2017

The City of Timmins, along with many other northern communities, is aging. With just over one-third of the population over fifty, the community is faced with the challenge of adapting to its changing demographics.

To respond to this change, the Timmins Economic Development Corporation developed a partnership with the Venture Centre. The two organizations were able to secure a grant to assess and plan an age-friendly strategy for the city.

In 2017, the Seniors Advisory Committee took on responsibility for carrying out the strategy's recommendations. Their results are encouraging and the group is off to a great start. Traffic lights across the busiest street have been extended to increase safety crossing the street, especially in the winter months.

A fall fair in collaboration with the local Stay on Your Feet Coalition will highlight a number of healthcare goods and services available to enhance older adults' quality of life in Timmins.

For more information about this work, please contact Patrick Nowak at the Porcupine Health Unit at 705-267-1181.



Age-friendly



Safe Disposal of Medication in Sault Ste. Marie

July 2017

This past spring, residents were encouraged to learn about the importance of proper medication management at a prescription drop-off event held at the Station Mall in Sault Ste. Marie.

The Sault Rising Stars performed musical pieces and a skit focused on the safe use of medications by older adults. During the event, members of the Sault Rising Stars talked to mall patrons about the importance of proper medication management to help prevent falls.

As part of the event, green medication collection bags were distributed throughout the community to individuals as well as community partners to encourage safe disposal of medication.

The event was a partnership between the Ontario Provincial Police, Sault Ste. Marie Police Services, Safe Communities Partnership, Algoma, Public Health, Batchewana Police, Anishinabek Police and Sault Rising Stars.

For more information about how to safely discard of medication, please contact Helen Kwolek at Algoma Public Health: 1-866-892-0172 extension 3125. Or call your local health unit.

