

## (Endnotes)

1. Health Canada/Veterans Affairs Canada Falls Prevention Initiative. (2002). Help yourself to assistive devices! [http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/seniors-aines/pubs/assistive/assistive4\\_e.htm](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/seniors-aines/pubs/assistive/assistive4_e.htm)
2. O'Loughlin, J.L. et al. 1993. Incidence of and risk factors for falls and injurious falls among the community-dwelling elderly. *American Journal of Epidemiology*, 137(3), 342-354.
3. Computations by Micheline Charest, Planning and Negotiations Coordinator, Veterans Affairs Canada. From Table HS7A, Veterans care needs survey, Statistics Canada, 1997. Cat. no 89-554-XPE.
4. The Hygeia Group. The economic burden of unintentional injury in Canada. Smartrisk, 1998.
5. Wilkins, K. Health care consequences of falls for seniors. *Health Reports*. 10(4) 1999, Statistics Canada.
6. Statistics and trends. Prepared for the Canadian Conference on Injury Prevention and Control by the Alberta Centre for Injury Control and Research, 2000.
7. Computations by Injury Section, Health Surveillance & Epidemiology Division, CHHD, PPHB, Health Canada. Analysis of Statistics Canada 1997 mortality data.
8. Canadian Institute for Health Information. National Trauma Registry report, hospital injury admissions, 1998/99. Ottawa: the Institute, 2001.
9. The Hygeia Group. The economic burden of unintentional injury in Canada. Smartrisk, 1998.

**1 in 3 seniors fall each year.**  
It could happen to you or  
someone you love.



*Assistive Devices to Help Prevent Falls.*

A joint venture between the University of Ottawa  
and the Canadian Association of Occupational  
Therapists (CAOT).

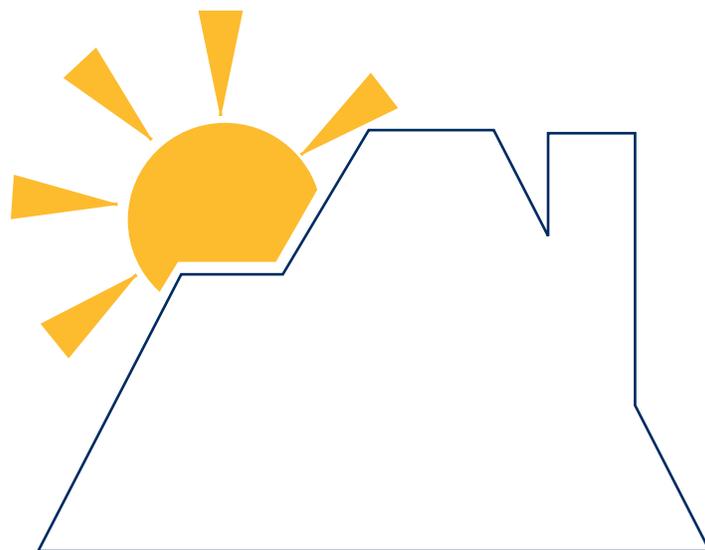
For more information about this project please contact  
the CAOT at **613-523-2268** or **[www.caot.ca](http://www.caot.ca)**

This pamphlet was adapted from *You Can Prevent Falls!*, a Health Canada/Veterans Affairs Canada Falls Prevention Initiative.

Funding provided by Health Canada/Veterans  
Affairs Canada Falls Prevention Initiative.

The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent  
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should not be taken as advice or treatment from a doctor  
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medical or health care advice or delay in seeking it  
because of something you have read in this pamphlet.



Prevent falls and  
maintain your independence:

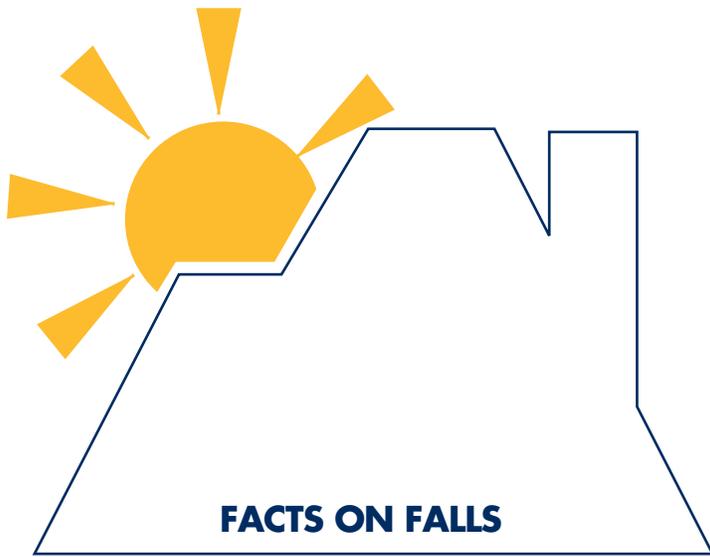
# Protect yourself from falls!

Falls are the leading cause of fatal injuries  
among Canadian seniors.

## Nothing to lose, everything to gain!

Assistive devices can have a positive  
impact on your mental and physical  
health. By living the active, social life  
you desire, you remain independent, self-  
confident and positive. Use assistive  
devices such as canes, grab bars, bath  
seats, non-slip mats and hip protectors  
with confidence. You'll become a model  
initiative and good sense for others who  
are reluctant to enjoy their benefits!<sup>1</sup>





## FACTS ON FALLS

- **Seniors' falls result in a loss of independence.** Seniors are more likely to be admitted to hospital from an injury as a result of a fall than any other age group. In fact, over half (56%) of all admissions due to falls occurred in persons 65 years of age or over.<sup>2</sup>
- **Approximately 30% of community-dwelling seniors experience at least one fall each year.**<sup>3</sup>
- **37% of veterans experienced one or more falls in the one-year period from June 1996-97.**<sup>4</sup>
- **Hip fractures are a common type of fall injury among seniors.** The number of annual hip fractures among seniors is expected to increase from 23,375 in 1993 to 88,214 by the year 2041.<sup>5</sup>
- **Seniors who fall face a greater risk of permanent institutionalization than those who do not.** According to one study, the odds of moving to a long-term care facility following an injurious fall were nearly triple the odds for people who had not fallen.<sup>6</sup>
- **Injury death rates rise steeply with age.**<sup>7</sup> In 1997, falls accounted for 20% of all injury deaths among adults age 65 or over.<sup>8</sup>
- **Direct health care costs of falls are \$2.4 billion annually.**<sup>9</sup>

## TIPS TO HELP YOU PREVENT FALLS

To improve your chances of keeping safe and not falling, use the following list and post in a convenient spot for frequent checking.

### Your Health

- Eat regular, well-balanced meals.
- Be physically active every day - exercise for strength and balance.
- Take your medications properly and look after your health (check with your doctor or pharmacist).

### Your Home

- Install assistive devices around your home such as grab bars, non-slip surfaces and railings.
- Keep your home and yard free of hazards; pathways and steps should be free of ice, snow, newspapers and leaves.
- Ask for assistance with any work that you are not comfortable doing (i.e. heavy lifting).

### Your Independence

- Use assistive devices for walking. If you have hearing aids or glasses, remember to wear them.  
**Don't forget you need all of your senses for your balance!**
- Plan your outings to allow plenty of time - never rush.

### Your Community

- Keep an eye out for dangers and hazards; inform the proper officials of any unsafe condition.

## TAKE CARE!

Tools for  **Living Well**