

# Falls Prevention Education: Behavioural Risk Factors

***Behavioural risk factors include actions, emotions or choices of the individual.***

Behavioural Risk Factor	What can we do?
<p><b>History of Falls</b> Having a history of falls is one of the strongest predictors of future falls. Older adults who experience one or more falls are three times more likely to fall again within the following year compared to older adults with no history of falls.</p>	<p><b>Determine if seniors have a history of falls <u>as early as possible</u> in order to put interventions in place sooner.</b></p> <p><b>Use CHATS' Falls Risk Assessment Profile.</b></p>
<p><b>Fear of Falling</b> Due to a fear of falling many people decrease their physical activity, which leads to muscle weakness and poor balance, further increasing their risk of falling.</p>	<p><b>Provide education on how to prevent falls to reduce fear.</b></p>
<p><b>Risk-taking behaviour</b> Behaviour is considered risk-taking when there is a difference between the risk and the abilities of the individual engaging in the activity. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Climbing a ladder</li> <li>• Standing on an unsteady chair rather than a secure step stool</li> <li>• Walking without a mobility aid when it is needed</li> <li>• Clearing snow/ice off a walkway.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Provide education on safe ways to complete everyday activities</b> which may be putting the client at risk for a fall</p> <p><b>Make referrals to appropriate services:</b> Refer to our Home Adaptation and Maintenance (HAMP) Program (where applicable) for snow removal and in-home adaptation supports. Call Gail at 1-866-677-9048 ext. 6227</p>
<p><b>Lack of Exercise</b> Lack of physical activity is associated with reduced mobility, decline in physical function, muscle weakness, and poor balance.</p>	<p><b>Encourage physical activity:</b> physical activities that focus on balance, gait, muscle strength, flexibility, endurance and coordination</p> <p><b>CHATS Adult Day Programs and Wellness Programs offer exercise components!</b></p>
<p><b>Footwear</b> Many potential fall hazards result from improper footwear.</p>	<p><b>Encourage the use of proper footwear:</b> Shoes should be the right size, have a low heel, wide area for toes to move around, laces, buckles or Velcro that hold the foot firmly.</p>
<p><b>Use of Assistive Devices</b> Assistive devices can promote independence, mobility and help prevent future falls.</p>	<p><b>Encourage the use of appropriate assistive devices:</b> Assistive devices can promote independence and mobility and may prevent falls if used properly and are safely maintained</p> <p><b>Encourage safe maintenance of assistive devices:</b> Ensure brakes, wheels, cane tips are in working order.</p>
<p><b>Poor Nutrition or Hydration</b> Dehydration and/or malnutrition can cause weakness, fatigue and frailty.</p>	<p>Provide education on the importance of nutrition and eating adequate fluids.</p> <p><b>CHATS Adult Day Programs, Wellness/Lunch-out offer lunches and snacks! Meals on Wheels may be an excellent option!</b></p>

(Source: Fall Prevention Programming, Vicky Scott, PhD, RN)