



## Seniors' Falls Prevention

### Issue

When an individual falls, the consequences can range from a minor cut to a major injury. However, when an older adult falls, the results can be much more devastating. Often, falls in seniors result in injury, loss of mobility, a reduced quality of life and in certain cases, death<sup>2</sup>. When a senior falls, not only is the individual impacted, but so are their friends, family, care providers and the health care system as a whole<sup>3</sup>. To put this in perspective, the direct costs attributed to falls in BC in 2013-2014 came close to \$200 million<sup>2</sup>. In the Vancouver Coastal Health region, falls from any height resulted in the largest number of injuries resulting in hospitalization<sup>4</sup>. Astonishingly, it is estimated that between 20% and 30% of Canadian seniors fall each year<sup>3</sup>.

### Statistics

- Falls is among the top three causes of death due to injury per 100,000 VCH residents<sup>4</sup>
- Females aged 45-64 and 65+ experience the largest number of ER visits due to falls
- The highest occurring external cause of injury was "fall on same level from slipping, tripping and stumbling"<sup>1</sup>, with the most falls occurring in the summer time<sup>1</sup>
- Roughly 40% of fall related hospital cases were due to hip fractures<sup>2</sup> and 50% of hip fracture patients will not regain pre-injury ambulation status<sup>2</sup>
- Seniors with fall-related injuries often stay in the hospital twice as long as seniors hospitalized for other reasons<sup>2</sup>
- More than one third of seniors who are hospitalized for a fall, are discharged to long-term care<sup>3</sup>
- The majority of falls resulting in hospitalizations occurred at home, followed by a residential institution<sup>3</sup>

### Tools

- These **Age-friendly BC** community videos feature seniors, local government staff and officials, and community representatives talking about what makes their community or organization age-friendly. We hope their advice and examples will help inspire you to come up with ways for your community to become more age-friendly - <http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/seniors/about-seniorsbc/seniors-related-initiatives/age-friendly-bc/ideas-in-action>
- The **BC Injury Research and Prevention Unit (BCIRPU)** website includes facts, reports & publications, educational components and additional resources available to the public on a variety of issues including seniors' falls prevention - <http://www.injuryresearch.bc.ca/quick-facts/seniors-falls-prevention/>
- **Canadian Fall Prevention Education Collaborative** is an interactive E-Learning falls prevention curriculum designed for health care professionals and community leaders working with older adults. Participants learn how to "design, implement and evaluate a fall prevention program tailored to their work or community setting" - <http://www.canadianfallprevention.ca/cfpc-e-learning/>
- The **Vancouver Coastal Health Fall Prevention** website contains a variety of resources in multiple languages to help you stay healthy, independent and on your feet. The first step to avoiding a fall is to understand the causes and how to prevent them. Explore this website to learn how to make practical choices that will help you stay on your feet, including how to make a plan in case you fall - <http://fallprevention.vch.ca/your-home/client-resources/>
- **Parachute's Horizon** is an online hub that connects Canadians with evidence-based tools to prevent injuries including seniors' falls - <http://horizon.parachutecanada.org/en/?s=seniors+falls+prevention>

### References

1: BC Trauma Registry Annual Data Summary Report 2013-2014 2: BC Injury Research Prevention Unit 3: Public Health Agency of Canada: Seniors Falls Report 2014 4: VCH Injury Profile 2014 5: Icon made by Freepik at [www.flaticon.com](http://www.flaticon.com)