

Health Unit Media Release



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Spring Forward, Don't Fall Back - It's Time to Prevent a Fall!

Spring is finally here! Although the slippery, icy days of winter are behind us, falls can still occur. Many people are outside walking again, doing yard clean-up, and spring cleaning; all of which, without planning ahead, can lead to a fall. **Studies show falls occur in all age groups, but most often among older adults (65 yrs +).** Half of all injuries in this age group are due to falls and falls are the 6th leading cause of death. **Additionally, falls can significantly impact the lives of older adults by jeopardizing their independence and quality of life** (Active Independent Aging Website, 2005). **The Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit promotes planning ahead and following the 5 Smartrisk messages to reduce the risk of a fall.**

LOOK FIRST

- Assess your home for hazards
- Ensure commonly used pathways are well lit
- Clear outdoor walkways of leaves, ice and snow
- Remove clutter from commonly used indoor areas especially stairs
- Have regular health check ups and eye exams

WEAR THE GEAR

- Wear supportive, non-skid footwear
- Wear personal emergency response devices if necessary
- Keep a flashlight and phone within reach at the bedside in case of emergency
- Use assistive devices properly if required

STAY SOBER

- Alcohol, drugs, some medications, fatigue and distractions can increase your risk of falling by impairing your judgment, coordination, and reaction time.

BUCKLE UP

- Ensure shoes are properly fastened
- Attach emergency numbers by the phone
- Remove scatter mats or ensure they are properly secured.

GET TRAINED

- Know your abilities and limitations, and ask for assistance when needed
- Regular physical activity can help strengthen muscles and bones, and improve balance and coordination (Canada's Physical Activity Guide).
- By following Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating, the body's nutritional needs can be met. Drinking enough water is also important to prevent falls.

For more information on Falls Prevention contact the Health Action Line at 1800 660-5853 or 345-5685 and visit our website at www.healthunit.org.

Most Injuries are Predictable and Preventable - Plan Ahead, Prevent a Fall!

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