

Lifeline



Preventing Falls

Strategies to help reduce falls risk in older adults



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Falls among seniors are on the rise¹

Falls and fall injuries are one of the common causes loss of independence. 40% of nursing home admissions are a result of a fall².

Although preventing falls is the best solution, not all falls can be prevented. And about half of older adults who fall cannot get back up without help³. If you fall, Lifeline can get help quickly, reducing injury and complications that can happen if you're unable to get up.

This guide can help seniors continue to live independently and confidently at home.

1. Bergen G., et al., "Falls and Fall Injuries Among Adults Aged >65 Years — United States, 2014," MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep 2016;65:993–998. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm6537a2>.

2. Public Health Agency of Canada, Technical report: Deaths due to falls among Canadians age 65 and over. An analysis of data from the Canadian Vital Statistics as presented in: Report on Seniors' falls in Canada, p2.

3. Falls, Fractures, and Injury, Merck Manual of Geriatrics, Section 2, Chapter 20, www.merck.com/mkgr/mmg/sec2/ch20/ch20a.jsp.

3 IMPORTANT QUESTIONS to ask yourself



1. How can I reduce my fall risk?
2. If I fell tonight, could I get up by myself?
3. If I couldn't get up, how would I get help?



If you fall, Lifeline can get help quickly, reducing injury and complications that can happen if you're unable to get up.

Lifeline with fall detection provides an added layer of protection by automatically placing a call for help if a fall is detected and you can't push your button.*



* Equipment may not detect all falls. If able, users should always push their button when they need help.

Falls are the leading cause of injury and hospitalization among older adults.¹ When you say “YES” to these questions, falls become less likely.

Do I exercise regularly?

Yes No

Physical activity increases your muscle strength and balance. Your healthcare provider can provide an exercise program that’s right for you.

Do I follow a sensible, balanced diet?

Yes No

Good nutrition results in higher energy and stronger bones. Talk to your healthcare provider about your diet and any necessary supplements.

Have I done a home safety inspection?

Yes No

Eliminate obvious hazards (such as poor lighting, throw rugs and clutter). Add safety modifications (such as grab bars, nonslip mats and night lights).

Do I take extra care?

Yes No

Take your time and think ahead, especially in new or unfamiliar places. When you rise from your chair, stand for a few seconds before walking.

Do I wear the right shoes?

Yes No

Select sturdy, low-heeled shoes with rubber soles for traction. Make sure they fit properly.

Has my healthcare provider reviewed my medications?

Yes No

Be sure to report all your medications, both prescription and over the counter, so that your healthcare provider can assess the benefits and risks of each drug.

Have I discussed my fears with my healthcare provider?

Yes No

Tell your doctor if you’ve experienced a fall, or if you’re having dizziness, balance problems or impaired vision. Services may be recommended to help you walk more safely and to get up correctly if you do fall.

Do I have a medical alert service?

Yes No

Knowing that prompt help is available can give you the confidence to be as active as possible. Staying active is important to avoid falls.

Lifeline provides peace of mind because help is available at the push of a button. And **Lifeline with fall detection** can even detect your fall automatically.

Use this checklist to minimize fall risk



Outside your home

- ✓ Paint the edges of outdoor steps and any steps that are especially narrow or are higher or lower than the rest.
- ✓ Paint outside stairs with a mixture of sand and paint for better traction. Keep outdoor walkways clear and well-lit.
- ✓ Clear snow and ice from entrances and sidewalks.

Inside your home

- ✓ Remove all extraneous clutter.
- ✓ Tack rugs and glue vinyl flooring so they lie flat. Remove or replace rugs or runners that tend to slip, or attach nonslip backing.
- ✓ Do not stand on a chair to reach things. Store frequently used objects where you can reach them easily.

Keep a well-lit home

- ✓ Have a lamp or light switch that you can easily reach without getting out of bed.
- ✓ Use night lights in the bedroom, bathroom and hallways.
- ✓ Have light switches at both ends of stairs and halls.

Bathroom tips

- ✓ Add grab bars in shower, tub and toilet areas.
- ✓ Use nonslip adhesive strips or a mat in shower or tub.
- ✓ Consider sitting on a bench or stool in the shower and using an elevated toilet seat.

Use care walking

- ✓ Use helping devices, such as canes, as directed by your healthcare provider.
- ✓ Wear nonslip, low-heeled shoes or slippers. Avoid walking around on stocking feet.

And don't forget...

- ✓ Review medications with your doctor or pharmacist. Some drugs can make you drowsy, dizzy and unsteady.
- ✓ Have your hearing and eyesight tested. Inner ear problems can affect balance. Vision problems make it difficult to see potential hazards.
- ✓ Exercise regularly to improve muscle flexibility, strength, and balance.
- ✓ If you feel dizzy or lightheaded, sit down or stay seated until your head clears.

With Lifeline, you can continue living independently longer knowing that you're covered by the #1 medical alert service in Canada today¹.

¹ Claim based on the number of subscribers.

Overcoming fear of falling



Fear of falling can start and accelerate a cycle of decline

Exercise and safety modifications are important steps in helping to prevent falls. But many seniors may have a fear of falling. Having such a fear is a common and potentially disabling problem among seniors.

Approximately 25% to 55% of older adults report having a fear of falling. Among this group, between 20% and 55% report restricting their activity. This can lead to reduced strength, balance, and energy which can lead to an increased risk of a fall¹.



1. Murphy S., et al., "The development of fear of falling among community-living older women: predisposing factors and subsequent fall events." The Journals of Gerontology. Series A, Biological sciences and medical sciences vol. 58,10 (2003): M943-7. doi:10.1093/gerona/58.10.m943

Medications and the risk of falling



Medications are prescribed to help manage illnesses, but there can be risks. Some medications can cause drowsiness, dizziness, or vision problems which can increase the risk of a fall. Some medications can also decrease bone density or increase the risk of bleeding, which can increase the severity of a fall injury.¹

The risk of falling increases with the number of prescription and over the counter medications taken. Talking with a healthcare professional and taking medications as prescribed can reduce your risk of falling and improve your health and ability to live independently.²



Speak to your doctor or pharmacist

It's important to understand the prescription medications, over the counter medications, vitamins and other supplements you are taking. Be sure to talk with your doctor or pharmacist about them using the questions below.

And while you're at it, ask about medication reminder services that can help you take your medications on time.

7 important questions to ask about your medications

1. Why do I need this medicine?
2. For how long should I take this medicine?
3. When should I take this medicine? (e.g. morning? evening?)
4. How should I take this medicine (e.g. with food? water?)
5. Are there side effects I should know about?
6. What do I do if I miss a dose or take too much?
7. Are there foods or drinks I should avoid with this medicine?



1. Cadario B, Scott V. Drugs and the risk of falling in the elderly: A new guideline from the BC fall and injury prevention coalition. Br Columbia Med J. 2010;52(5):268.
2. K. Cameron, R.Ph., M.P.H, The Role of Medication Modification in Fall Prevention. NCOA: Falls Free: Promoting a National Falls Prevention Action Plan, (2005): 29-39.

Exercises for older adults



A. Exercises From a Seated Position

Do not overdo it. Start slowly and gradually build the number of repetitions. Use a firm chair.

Neck stretches

Side bends: Tilt head sideways as if to touch ear to shoulder.

Right: Hold 10 seconds, 10 repetitions

Left: Hold 10 seconds, 10 reps

Chin to chest:

Hold 10 seconds, 10 reps



Rowing

Make sure to sit as straight as possible. Place arm straight out in front and then pull arm back with elbow next to your side.

Right arm: 10 reps

Left arm: 10 reps

Both arms: 10 reps



Arm raises

Raise arm up, pause at the top for 2 seconds, then bring down.

Right arm: 10 reps

Left arm: 10 reps

Both arms: 10 reps



Back stretching and strengthening

With legs apart, place hands on each side of right knee. Slide hands from knee to ankle and return to upright sitting position.

Right knee: 10 reps

Left knee: 10 reps



Seated marching

Alternate lifting knees to chest as if marching

Right leg: 10–15 reps

Left leg: 10–15 reps



Ankle range of motion

Point toes up as far as possible and then down as far as possible. Rotate both feet.

Clockwise: 20 reps

Counterclockwise: 20 reps



Knee extension

Straighten knee, pause, then lower foot back to floor.

Right leg: 10 reps

Left leg: 10 reps



Small kicks

Straighten and bend knee as in a kicking motion

Right leg: 10–15 reps

Left leg: 10–15 reps



Exercises for older adults



B. Exercises from a standing position

To maintain balance, use a kitchen counter or the back of a sturdy chair that doesn't have wheels.

Calf stretch

Hold the back of a chair. Step back with right foot, keeping foot straight. Lean forward, keeping right heel on floor.

Right leg: Hold 30 seconds, 3 reps

Left leg: Hold 30 seconds, 3 reps



Heel and toe raise

Stand straight. With feet shoulder-width apart, rise up on toes, pause, then lower back down.

Then lift toes, keeping heels flat, and lower back down.

Both feet together: 10 reps



Lateral leg swing

Hold the back of a chair. Move leg straight out to side without bending knee or waist. Keep toes pointed forward.

Right leg: 10 reps

Left leg: 10 reps



Mini-squats

Hold the back of a chair. Bend knees as far as is comfortable. Keep back and head up straight and behind toes, as in diagram. Then return to standing position.

10 reps



Hip flexion and extension

Hold the back of a chair and bring your right knee up as close to your chest as possible, trying not to bend at the waist.

Slowly lower your leg and swing it straight behind you without bending your knee. Then lower it back to the starting position.

Right leg: 10 reps

Left leg: 10 reps



Note: Be sure to consult with your healthcare provider before beginning an exercise program. The exercises suggested here do not substitute for a program provided by your healthcare provider.



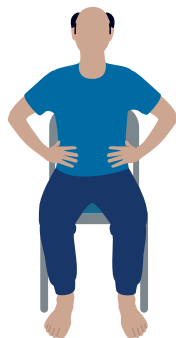
Yoga for Seniors

Yoga is one of the best forms of exercise for older adults to build strength while helping to improve flexibility and balance. Seniors with limited mobility can practice chair yoga, either from a seated position or by standing behind a chair for support..

1. Ujjayi breathing

A great starter pose: sit up tall at the edge of your seat and place your hands on your waist. Take a deep breath in through your nose, expanding through your sides and abdomen, then exhale slowly.

Repeat for 10 breaths.



2. Cat/Cow

This pose helps to relieve back and neck tension. Inhale and arch your back to look up at the ceiling. Exhale, pulling your abdominals in and rounding your back as you bend forward.

Repeat this 5 times.



3. Circles

To release and relax the hip muscles, circle your hips clockwise 5 times while seated without moving your upper body, then do the same counterclockwise 5 times.



5. Sun salutations with twists

Repeat the previous exercise, adding a twist as you exhale.

Repeat 5 times on each side, holding the last twist for 5 seconds.



4. Sun salutation arms

This lengthens the spine, releases tension in the shoulders and neck. Sitting tall, breathe in and lift your arms up, pressing your palms overhead. On an exhale, float your arms back down to your sides.

Repeat 5 times.



6. High altar side leans

Stretches spine and shoulders. Lift your arms and interlace your fingers in front of you. Turn your palms to the ceiling as you straighten your arms above your head.

Lean to the right for 3 breaths, then to the left for 3 more breaths.



***NOTE:** Always consult with your healthcare professional before using the poses in this brochure. These exercises are not a substitute for an exercise program provided by your healthcare practitioner. Stop doing yoga if you experience any pain or discomfort while performing these poses.



7. Eagle arms

Helps reduce shoulder aches. Stretch your arms out to each side, bring one arm under the other at shoulder height and bend your arms at the elbows with palms together.

Hold for 5 breaths, unwind and repeat with opposite arms.



9. Ankle to knee

The hip area is also a stress spot. To loosen things up, sit up straight, bend your right knee and place your right ankle over your left knee. For a deeper stretch, lean forward.

Hold for 5 breaths, then repeat on the opposite side.



11. Warrior 2

This gives you a full-body stretch. Sit tall at the edge of your seat. Bend your right knee to the side and stretch your left leg out behind you as you press your outer heel down.

Hold for 5 breaths, then repeat on the opposite side.



8. Assisted neck stretches

The neck is a major stress area. Drape your right arm over your head until your palm reaches your left ear. Let your head fall to your right shoulder, then hold for 5 breaths.

Repeat on the opposite side.



10. Goddess with a Twist

Another great hip stretch: Open your legs wide and point your toes out. Place your right arm inside your right leg, reaching for the floor. Lift your left arm toward the ceiling and look up to your palm.

Hold for 5 breaths, then repeat on the opposite side.



12. Forward Fold

To finish, let blood flow to your brain. Sit tall and straight, then fold down over your legs, letting your head, neck, and body hang limp.

Hold for as long as you want before rolling back up to a sitting position.





Why is tai chi important for seniors?

Tai chi is a low-impact exercise that puts minimal stress on muscles and joints, making it generally safe for seniors – including those who otherwise might not exercise. It requires no special equipment and can be performed anywhere, indoors or out.

1. The lower body warm-up - All exercise programs should start with a warm-up to help ease your muscles into doing their work and to avoid injuring yourself. Tai chi is no different. For a basic lower-body warm-up, try this:

1. Stand with your feet flat on the floor and legs slightly wider than hip-distance apart.
2. Hold a slight bend in your knees.
3. Have your arms either relaxed or with your hands on your hips. If you need extra support, try resting your hands on a chair back or rail.
4. With a slow, controlled movement, shift your weight to one side so that around 70% of it is supported on one leg, then shift your weight to the opposite leg.
5. Repeat this movement at least three to five times.

2. The torso twist - Torso twists are a great way to warm up your waist area. Here's how to do them:

1. Stand with your feet flat on the floor and legs slightly wider than hip-distance apart.
2. Put your hands on your hips. This allows you to feel where the turning movement is coming from. You want it to be coming from your torso, not your hips.
3. Have a slight bend in your knees
4. Deeply inhale and feel your spine stretch. Exhale, and as you do so, gently twist to one side, using just your torso to make the move. You'll naturally feel your hips move slightly too; this is fine, as long as the twist is centered from your torso.
5. Inhale back to center and repeat the twist to the other side.

3. Touch the sky

This exercise can also be used as part of your warm-up. It's great for stretching your abdominal area and assisting with core stability. You can do it from either a seated or standing position. Here's how:

1. Either sit up straight in a comfortable chair or stand with your feet flat on the floor, legs slightly wider than your hips.
2. If you're starting from a seated position, rest your hands in your lap with your palms turned upward and fingertips pointing toward one another. If standing, hold your arms loosely at your sides, palms open.
3. Inhale slowly and at the same time, raise your palms slowly to your chest level.
4. Turn your palms outward and lift your hands above your head, keeping your elbows relaxed and slightly bent.
5. Exhale slowly and relax your arms, gently lowering them to your sides.
6. Return your hands to the starting position and repeat this at least ten times.

4. Drawing the bow

This is a simple, standing tai chi exercise, great for opening up your chest and building arm and leg strength. Here's how to do it:

1. Stand with your feet flat and your right foot slightly wider than hip-width.
2. Gently twist your head and torso to the right.
3. With loose fists, inhale and lift both arms to chest height out to your right. Your left elbow will be bent with your fist over your chest, while your right arm reaches out.



4. Exhale and pull your left elbow back as though drawing a bow. At the same time, lift your right thumb and forefinger, pointing to the sky like an arrow.
5. Bend your knees, squatting as deeply as you can.
6. Looking beyond your right hand, inhale, then exhale as you lower your arms and return your body to a neutral position.
7. Repeat the exercise, this time starting from the left side by moving your left foot slightly wider than hip-width.
8. Do this at least three times on each side.

5. Windmill

This exercise helps to improve your flexibility and open up your spine. Here's how to do it:

1. Stand with your feet flat on the floor, slightly wider than shoulder-width apart.
2. Relax your shoulders and let your arms hang loosely by your sides.
3. Move your hands in front of your body, fingers pointing to the floor.
4. As you inhale, raise your arms up through the center of your body and onward to over your head. Keep your fingers pointed throughout.
5. Stretch toward the ceiling, arching your spine slightly backward. (Be gentle here!)
6. Exhale and slowly bend your back forward to the floor, moving your hands with pointed fingers back through the center of your body.
7. Bend forward from your hips, allowing your arms to loosely hang.
8. Inhale, returning to the starting position.
9. Repeat this at least three times.

6. Hand exercise

This hand exercise helps to promote flexibility in your shoulders, hands, and fingers. Here's how to do it:

1. Stand with your feet flat and slightly wider than shoulder-width apart.
2. Raise your arms out in front of you, keeping them parallel to the floor. Your shoulders, elbows, and wrists should be aligned.
3. Flex your hands with your palms facing forward and rotate your wrists to the left and right.
4. Repeat at least three to five times per side.

7. The golden lion shakes its mane

This seated exercise helps to gently stretch your back. Here's how to do it:

1. Sit up straight in a comfortable chair with your hands lightly resting on your thighs.
2. Breathe deeply and comfortably in and out. On an exhale, lean forward until you can feel the stretch in your lower back.
3. Near the end of your range of motion, twist your shoulders to one side, allowing your head and neck to turn with your shoulders and spine.
4. Inhale slowly, twisting back to face forward, and sitting up in your starting position.
5. On your next exhalation, repeat the exercise, but for the opposite side.
6. Repeat this up to ten times for each side.

Home safety assessment and modifications



Falls in the home commonly occur in bathrooms and bedrooms, as well as on stairs. Making a few modifications in the home can prevent dangerous situations, such as slippery floors, poor lighting, loose rugs, raised thresholds, and clutter. Visit each room in the home. Then look at the space objectively and ask: Is this safe? Are there objects or items that present falls risk? If so, there are many ways to create a safer home.

Note: These are guidelines only. Please consult with your healthcare professional before installing any adaptive equipment.



Overall safety issues

All areas of my home are well lit

- Improve lighting with light-sensitive nightlights and/or motion-detection lights that turn on automatically.

My floor coverings are in good repair

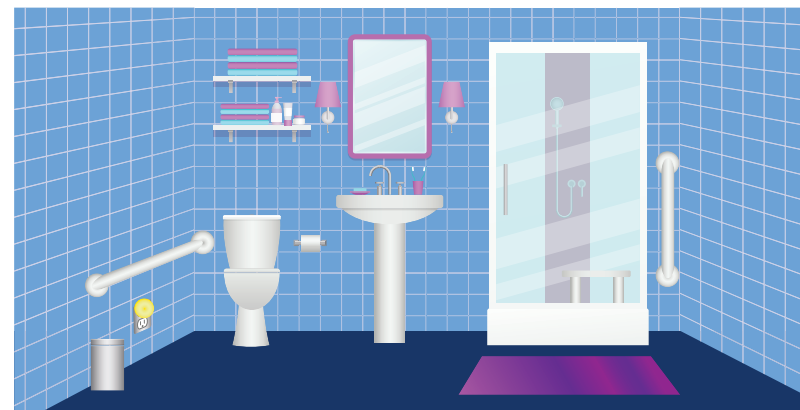
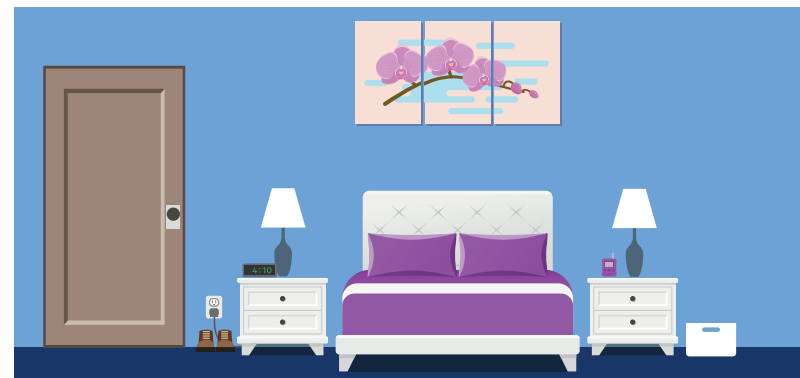
- Repair torn/worn carpeting and linoleum.
- Secure throw rugs with double-sided tape or no-slip rug pads, or remove the throw rugs entirely.
- Replace shag carpet with low-pile.

The main walking areas are free of obstacles

- Rearrange furniture to allow a clear path.
- Keep plants and tables along walls or in corners.
- Clean up clutter.

All of my phone and electric cords are out of the way

- Remove all cords from walkways.



Home safety assessment and modifications



Bedroom

The room is set up to help avoid stumbles

- Create a safe path around the room by rearranging furniture.
- Clean up shoes, clothing, and other clutter.
- Keep bedding tucked in.

My light can be turned on and off without getting out of bed

- Place a lamp or nightlight within reach of the bed.
- Install a nightlight.



Bathroom

The floors of my bathroom and my tub/shower have non-slip surfaces

- Place non-slip mats or strips in the tub or on the shower floor.
- Add two-sided carpet tape to keep a bathroom rug in place.

My tub, shower, and toilet have sturdy grab bars

- Install grab bars next to your tub, shower, and toilet.
(Towel racks don't count – they can pull out of the wall.)

My shower is designed to reduce risk of falls

- Add a sturdy shower seat.
- Add a handheld shower head with hose.

My toilet is at a comfortable height

- Consider installing an elevated toilet seat.

I have nightlights in the bathroom to help me see

- Get a light-sensitive nightlight that turns on automatically.



Kitchen

The floor is designed to reduce the risk of tripping

- Place a rubber mat in front of the sink.
- Repair rough flooring.

The items I use most often are easy to reach

- Move the items you use most often to lower cabinets and drawers.
- Use a step stool to reach items in high cabinets.



Indoor stairways

All of my stairways have handrails on both sides

- Install handrails for both hands – even on short sets of steps.

The steps are slip-resistant and in good repair

- Attach carpet securely and repair any holes.
- If steps are bare wood, add slip-resistant pads.

Visibility is good on all of my stairways and landings

- Install motion-detection lighting.
- Install light switches at both the top and bottom of stairs.
- Add contrasting paint or glow-in-the-dark tape to edges of stairs to make them easier to see.

The stairway is kept clear

- Patrol your stairs regularly to make sure all objects are removed at all times.

Nutritional needs for older adults



Nutritional needs can change as people age. Certain nutritional elements become even more important while other vitamins and minerals may only be needed in small amounts.

As people get older, their metabolism slows down. They don't require as many calories for energy, which means they may need less to maintain their weight. The digestive system also changes and produces less of necessary fluids to aid in digestion. It becomes harder to digest food and absorb the vitamins and minerals in the food.

Senior women need different nutrition than men. In general, they require fewer calories and often need more calcium because they are a higher risk for osteoporosis.

Vitamin Requirements for Seniors

Here are several vitamins seniors need to help keep them healthy.

B6: a common deficiency, it results in anemia, higher risk of heart problems and loss of circulation, tingling in hands and feet and fragile skin

B12 deficiency results in anemia, fatigue, loss of appetite, problems with balance, diarrhea or constipation, depression and loss of concentration

Folic Acid deficiency results in anemia, loss of appetite, headaches, weight loss, diarrhea and forgetfulness

Vitamin D: comes from sunlight and many seniors spend less time outside which results in deficiency, necessary for absorption of calcium

Calcium: helps build strong bones and repairs breaks and fractures faster

As you can see, a lack of the right vitamins can result in poor physical health, which can lead to falls or more serious complications after a fall.



How to get up after a fall



A step-by-step guide showing the correct way to get up from a fall

Talk to your healthcare provider about having a fall-risk evaluation. The fact that you have fallen once means you have a high risk of falling again.

1 Prepare



Do NOT get up quickly. If hurt, call for help using Lifeline or a telephone.



Find something sturdy such as a piece of furniture.



Roll onto your side, turning your head, shoulders, hips, then leg.

2 Rise



Push your upper body up. Lift your head, pause, and steady yourself.



Rise slowly onto your hands and knees. Crawl to something sturdy you can hold on to.



Rise slowly and turn your body to sit in the chair.

3 Sit



Roll onto your side, turning your head, shoulders, hips, then leg.



Slide one foot forward so it is flat on the floor.



Sit for a few minutes before trying to do anything else.

There's a Lifeline solution for you

Lifeline can help you stay independent with peace of mind

At home

Help at the press of a button in and around the home.

Ideal Candidate: For people who spend much of their time at home and want to be able to access emergency help at any time, day or night.

Optional fall detection can automatically call for help if it detects a fall, even if you can't push your button.¹



On the Go

It's the mobile medical alert solution that gives you the freedom to go where you want, when you want.²

Ideal Candidate: Those who want to remain active and independent with confidence and peace of mind – at home or on the go.



MedReady Medication Dispenser

It's a simple, affordable and automated way to manage multiple medications with 24/7 monitoring.

Ideal Candidate: Those with complicated medication regimens, take multiple medications or have a tendency to forget to take their medications.



¹ Equipment may not detect all falls. If able, users should always push their button when they need help.

² On the go coverage outside the home and wireless service in the home provided with sufficient access to/coverage by the applicable third party wireless network. Certain limitations subject to third party cellular provider availability and coverage. Signal range may vary.

How to access the Lifeline service

Lifeline is the leading provider of medical alert services in Canada today.³ Lifeline helps empower older adults to feel safer, confident, and independent both at home or on the go.

Easy to use

Subscribers can press their help button at any time to request the assistance they need – anytime, anywhere.⁴

Fall detection

Our fall detection technology can automatically place a call for help if it detects a fall – even if subscribers are unable or reluctant to press their help button.¹

Responsive

Canadian round-the-clock monitoring with Lifeline’s specially trained Response Associates respond in 240+ languages, 24/7, 365 days a year.

Each subscriber decides how they would like to be helped – by a neighbour, family member, or emergency services.



Call today for more information

**1-800-LIFELINE
1-800-543-3546**

1. Equipment may not detect all falls. If able, users should always push their button when they need help.
2. On the go coverage outside the home and wireless service in the home provided with sufficient access to/coverage by the applicable third party wireless network. Certain limitations subject to third party cellular provider availability and coverage. Signal range may vary.
3. Claim based on the number of subscribers.
4. Coverage inside and outside the home provided where wireless network coverage is available. Recharging of the mobile pendant is done by the subscriber as needed by connecting it to its charger.

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