



Stay On Your Feet...

Step 7: Regularly Check Your Eyesight and Hearing

Eyesight

Visit an eye care professional every year to detect and manage any changes to your eyesight. If you are 65 years and older, you qualify for a free eye exam every year. Most changes are gradual so you may not notice them immediately. If left untreated, poor eyesight will increase your risk of falling.

- Have your eyewear checked annually by your eye care professional.
- Make sure you wear your prescribed eyewear as recommended.
- Allow up to two weeks to get used to new eyewear. If you still have problems after two weeks, return to your eye care professional.
- If you wear bifocal or multifocal glasses, be careful walking up and down stairs and when stepping off curbs.
- Eat a balanced diet with orange and dark green vegetables. They are important for maintaining good eyesight.
- Give your eyes time to adjust when you move into a darker or brighter area.

Watch for changes to your eyesight

Some people think if they can still read the newspaper or watch television, their eyesight is fine. This is not necessarily true. Some eye disorders may be temporary.

If you have any of the following changes, talk to your eye care professional as soon as possible:

- difficulty reading small print
- blurred or less detailed vision
- squinting
- watering of the eyes
- eyes taking longer to adjust to light changes, especially in the dark
- greater sensitivity to glare
- less accuracy when judging distances and depth
- loss of ability to see well in low-contrast light

Hearing

Hearing loss increases your chance of falling by reducing your overall awareness of your environment.

What causes hearing difficulties?

- wax buildup in the ear
- hearing aids that are dirty, have old batteries or are no longer appropriate for hearing loss
- certain medications
- inner ear problems
- conditions such as tinnitus (ringing or buzzing in the ears) or ménière's disease (raised pressure in the ear leading to dizziness and hearing loss)

What you can do?

- Talk to your health care provider if you have wax buildup or trouble hearing.
- Talk to your health care provider if you experience a decrease in your hearing. You may need to be referred to an ear, nose and throat specialist or an audiologist who will assess your hearing.
- Learn the proper care for your hearing aid.
- Clean your hearing aids often and check batteries regularly.

How am I protecting my eyesight and hearing?

Review what you are doing to protect your eyesight and hearing. Complete the table below. An example is given to help.

| What positive steps am I already taking? | What changes might help me stay on my feet? | How will I make these changes? Is there anyone I need to contact? | When will I make these changes? |
|--|---|--|--|
| <p>I have my eyes tested each year.</p> <p>I wear a hearing aid.</p> | <p>I need to mark the edge of the steps at the back door with bright paint.</p> <p>I will clean my hearing aid regularly.</p> | <p>I will make an appointment with my eye care professional to get my glasses checked.</p> <p>I will check my hearing aid battery.</p> | <p>I will call to make an appointment with my health care provider next week.</p> <p>I will ask my daughter to help me check the battery tomorrow.</p> |

Who else do you know who would benefit from this information?

Stay Active, Stay Independent and Stay On Your Feet!

For more information about risk factors for falls or local falls prevention programs, contact: **Stay On Your Feet Sudbury Manitoulin**

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