



Your Health Matters!

Fall prevention and Bone Health by Angela Kwok, pharmacist, Cunderdin Pharmacy

People's fall risk increases as they age. Every year in Australia, 1 in 4 people over 60 will fall and it increases to 1 in 3 by age 65. Up to 30% of falls can lead to moderate or severe injury. Slipping, tripping and stumbling are the most common causes of falls leading to hospitalisation; and falls remain a common cause (38%) in adults over 65 to be admitted to a hospital. Most common injuries from falls are hip and thigh fractures (38%), follow by head injuries (20%). If you have fallen more than once in the past six months, you are more likely to fall again.

Other Risk Factors for a fall: can either be Personal or Environmental

PERSONAL RISK FACTORS	ENVIRONMENTAL RISK FACTORS
Loss of Balance – due to impaired eye sight or decreased muscle strength	Insufficient lighting
Not being Active – strong leg muscle & joints keep your body supported	Tripping over objects on the floor, stairs or dangling from furniture
Diet: poor nutrition or missed meals may cause dizziness or loss of concentration	Slipping or tripping on lose mats, rugs and slippery floors
Too much Alcohol – affects mental alertness, causes sleepiness or loss of balance	Tripping on uneven surfaces such as floors, shower hobs or stairs
Not drinking enough Water - causes dehydration, confusion and dizziness. Insufficient water intake can actually cause concentrated urine, irritate the bladder, increase the urge to toilet and cause a fall when you rush to the toilet.	Outside your home: Slipping or tripping over wet or uneven paths
Sore Feet and Unsafe Shoes – foot problems can be painful, affect daily tasks, cause unstable feet and increase risk of falls	Outside your home: Tripping over objects left on lawn or in garage
Health problems which can increase falls risk include : Stoke, Parkinson's Disease, Arthritis, Low Blood Pressure, Dizziness, Diabetes, Depression, Dementia, Incontinence – i.e. problem with 'water works'	
Taking more than Five Medicines: some drugs may make you feel drowsy, dizzy, unsteady, blurred vision, confusion - especially benzodiazepines for sleep	

Falls can be Prevented! Fall Proofing Yourself and Your Surroundings...

Exercise: Tai chi can reduce falls by 37%, dancing & exercise that strengthen muscles and balance are best

Calcium and Vitamin D:

Adequate Vitamin D levels and dietary Calcium intake are needed for maximal primary fracture prevention

Vitamin D sources are mainly from skin exposure to sunlight as dietary sources provide only 5-10% of Vitamin D requirement. 15% body surface (arms, hands or feels) exposed for 6-7 minutes mid-morning or mid- afternoon on most days during summer or 15 minutes during winter is equal to around 1000 iu/day vitamin D.

Daily intakes of 1000- 1300 mg calcium per day, preferably from calcium rich foods (e.g. Cheese, Milk, Tofu) are important as low calcium intakes can increase degradation of Vitamin D compounds.

Eyesight: check your eyesight at least once every two years, wear sun glasses and a hat when outside.

Remove general hazards, ensure sufficient lighting (make sure you can reach switches) and wear safe shoes

Bone Health and Osteoporosis "Osteo" - bone, "Porosis"- something has holes in it, like a sponge.

Osteoporosis is a condition where bones become fragile, leading to higher risk of fracture than normal bone.

Over one million Australians have osteoporosis and it affects both men and women, especially those over 50.

Can Osteoporosis be prevented? Yes, ensure your bones are healthy by keeping sufficient dietary intake of **Calcium, Vitamin D** (via skin exposure) and **regular exercise** - even walking in your home! (at least 30 minutes, 5 days a week)

Can Osteoporosis be treated? Yes! Medicines for osteoporosis aim to slow bone loss and reduce fracture risk.

Common Medicines for Osteoporosis:

Bisphosphonates (Fosamax, Actonel)-slows down bone turn over and allows bone forming cells time to rebuild bone

Denosumab (Prolia) inject every 6 months – a protein that binds to another protein to make bone stronger

Strontium ranelate (Protos) – drink daily (sachet dissolve in a glass of water). It is absorbed into the bone similar to calcium, making bones denser and stronger and reduces spinal and other fracture risks over time

Useful Website:

<https://www.osteoporosis.org.au> (Osteoporosis Australia)

<https://www.stayonyourfeet.com.au> (Stay on your feet)

For more information about Fall Prevention, Bone health or Osteoporosis, talk to your **doctor or pharmacist**



