

revera 

the art of
AGING

*Senior-friendly
care & wellness advice*



Hale & **HEARTY**

At Revera, we believe that the best approach to your health is one that focuses on all aspects of your life. A holistic approach ensures that your physical, mental and emotional selves will be fit to face all of life's challenges.

I certify the content in this guide
to be senior-friendly.

To Your Health,
Dr. Rhonda Collins
Chief Medical Officer, Revera Inc.



Take charge of
your health and
wellness by using
this guide to shape your
decisions and consult with
your physician on the best plan
tailored to your needs.





Health & Wellness

Maintain good nutrition, hydration & fitness¹.



Nutrition: Poor nutrition can lead to weakness, frailty and falls. Nutrition is key to maintaining functionality and independence among older adults².



Hydration: Dehydration can lead to dizziness, fainting and low blood pressure which may put older adults at risk for falls³.



Functional Fitness: It's important to stay active to improve and maintain balance, strength and mobility. Focus should be on functional movements that can also help improve strength, balance, agility and coordination.



Medication Management and Falls Prevention: Ask your doctor or pharmacist to review your medications and assess if any increase your risk of falling. Medications include prescriptions, over-the-counter medicines, herbal supplements and vitamins⁴.



Footwear: Footwear selection can help prevent falls. Choose well fitted shoes with slip resistant soles to wear inside and outside the home. Discard loose, worn or backless slippers. Proper footwear should include a high back or collar to support the ankle and have a heel height lower than one inch¹.

¹ Public Health Agency of Canada, 2015

² Canadian Physiotherapy Association: Physiotherapy.ca

³ UnlockFood.ca (formerly EatRightOntario.ca)

⁴ FindingBalanceOntario.ca

Keep your BONES HEALTHY

Are your bones healthy? It's an important question to ask because more than two million Canadians have osteoporosis.

Osteoporosis is a change in our bones as we age that causes them to become thin and weak. This can cause the bones to break. The most common bones affected are the hip, the wrist the shoulder and the spine.

How do you know if you are at risk?

1. Are you over the age of 65?
2. Have you had a fracture of the hip, wrist, arm or spine after the age of 40?
3. Do you weigh less than 132 lbs?
4. Do you smoke?
5. Do you drink alcohol every day?
6. Do you take steroid medications regularly for another health condition?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, speak to your doctor or health care provider about lowering your risks and being tested for osteoporosis.

DID YOU KNOW:

Fractures from osteoporosis are more common than heart attacks, strokes and breast cancer combined

One in three women and one in five men will have a fracture due to osteoporosis

More than 80% of all fractures in people over the age of 50 are caused by osteoporosis

One in three people who fracture their hip will have another hip fracture within one year and one in two people will have another fracture within five years

Fewer than 20% of Canadians with fractures are tested or treated for osteoporosis

Keep your BRAIN HEALTHY

Your brain needs to be taken care of, just like your body. Here are some practices that have been shown to slow or improve memory loss:



Play Games

Games that challenge your brain include chess, puzzles, or crosswords.



Eat healthy

Avoid processed foods and focus on colourful fruits and vegetables, fish and lean meats, nuts and whole grains.



Try something new

Brush your teeth with the hand you don't normally use, learn to play an instrument, learn a new language.



Stay socially active

Staying connected with friends and family helps to protect against memory loss, so go grab a coffee or volunteer with a group.



Stay physically active

Exercises is just as important for your brain as it is for your body. Find an activity you enjoy and keep at it. The key is to keep moving.



Visit your doctor

Work with your doctor to manage your health. It's important to remember the things that aren't good for our health, like smoking or drinking too much alcohol, also aren't good for our memory.



How to **REDUCE** *your risk of* **FALLING**

The Public Health Agency of Canada reports that as much as 30% of Canadians over the age of 65 fall each year. Falls can cause serious injury, including hip fractures. At Revera, we take falls very seriously and it's our corporate aim to reduce the number of falls with injury by 50% by 2020.

What can you do to reduce your risk of falling?

BALANCE IS KEY

Using hand rails and grab bars can help to keep you steady.

SEEING IS BELIEVING

Our eyes change as we age. Regular vision checks are important for recognizing changes that might interfere with your sight.

SLOW & STEADY

Remember the tortoise and the hare? Slow and steady wins the race. Sit on the edge of the bed or chair for a couple of minutes before rising. This helps to prevent sudden changes in blood pressure. When you do start moving, take your time.

DECLUTTER & REPAIR

Tripping hazards include cracks in sidewalks and driveways, snow and ice, poor lighting, clutter, throw rugs and electrical cords. Removing or fixing these things and adding nightlights in every room can help to prevent trips and falls.

Exercises to Prevent FALLS & FRACTURES

The exercises listed here are recommended by Osteoporosis Canada and are not intended to replace advice from your healthcare professional. Consult your healthcare provider or a physical therapist about what exercises are right for you.



Strength Training

At least 2 days/week

- Exercises for legs, arms, chest, shoulders, back
- Use body weight against gravity, bands, or weights*
- 8 - 12 repetitions per exercise

Examples of exercises:

- Squats
- Wall push ups
- Seated row
- Upright row
- Step up



Aerobic Physical Activity

At least 150 mins/week

- Bouts of 10 mins or more, moderate to vigorous intensity*
- You should feel like your heart is beating faster and you are breathing harder
- You might be able to talk while doing it, but not sing

Examples of exercises:

- Brisk walking
- Dancing
- Jogging
- Aerobics class

Balance Exercises

Every day

- Have a sturdy chair, counter, or wall nearby, and try (from easier to harder): shift weight from heels to toes while standing; stand on one foot; walk on a pretend line
- Try exercises like Tai Chi and walking on your toes or heels

Posture Awareness

Every day

- Gently tuck your chin in and draw your chest up slightly
- Imagine your collarbones are wings – spread your wings slightly without pulling your shoulders back

Spine Sparing Strategies

Every day

Be mindful of movements that can injure your spine.

Don't:

- Bend forward or twist the spine quickly or repeatedly
- Bend too far forward (i.e. to tie shoes)
- Twist the torso all the way to the side
- Bend or twist your spine while holding weighted objects (i.e. groceries, grandchild)

Do:

- Bend with you hips and knees, not your spine
- Turn your whole body when rotating rather than twisting your spine
- Use a stool to tie your shoes

* If you have a spine fracture, consult a physical therapist/kinesiologist before using weights, and choose moderate, not vigorous aerobic physical activity.

Am I taking too many **MEDICATIONS?**

Medicine is important for treating disease and chronic health conditions, but how many do we really need?

A recent Canadian study found that almost half of seniors taking five or more medications had a side effect serious enough to require medical attention. Sometimes, the medicines can have side effects that are worse than the disease we are trying to treat.

It is important to understand that most of the studies that look at medications for health conditions do not include people over the age of 65 and most guidelines for treating diseases are designed for younger adults. For example, we have learned in the past several years that older people with diabetes do better with a sugar that's a little bit higher than what is recommended for younger people. This means if we try to lower an older adult's sugar to that of a younger person it may be too low and could cause dizziness which can lead to falls and hip fractures.

Finally, the more medicines we take the greater the risk of them interacting with one another to cause unpleasant symptoms. Sometimes we don't even know what effects can happen when multiple medications are used together. Also, as we age, doses of medicine often need to be lowered to reduce the risk of side effects.

If you take more than five medications, you should talk to your doctor or health care provider about whether you can get rid of some of them. Teamwork with your healthcare provider is important for your health.



Should I be taking **ANTIBIOTICS?**

Antibiotics are one of the greatest medical discoveries of the 20th century.

They can save lives and treat symptoms of serious bacterial infections. But, they are not for all infections and when they are not used properly they can cause more serious problems.

Antibiotics come with risks. Common side effects include nausea, vomiting and diarrhea. They can cause allergic reactions and can cause harm to your kidneys.

Also, when they are misused they can cause bacteria to become stronger and smarter. This is called "antibiotic resistance" and it means that the antibiotics can no longer kill the bacteria. This is a very serious problem as these antibiotics won't work when we really need them to.

It is important to know when antibiotics are needed and when they are not.

- Antibiotics will not help if you have an infection caused by a virus (like a cold or the flu)
- Antibiotics will not help if you do not have an infection
- Antibiotics are often not needed if you have bacteria in your urine (unless you have symptoms like fever, discomfort when urinating, feeling the need to use the bathroom frequently)

If you have symptoms of an infection, it is important to talk to your doctor or health care provider to decide if antibiotics are best. Not taking antibiotics when you don't have an infection is just as important for your health as taking them if you do.

Should I take VITAMIN D?



Vitamin D protects your bones

It is important for helping to absorb calcium, which helps keep our teeth and bones strong and helps to prevent osteoporosis, a disease that makes bones brittle and easy to break.

It also helps improve muscle function to improve balance and help prevent falls.



It's hard to get what you need from food

It is available in a few food sources that include cod liver oil, salmon, tuna fish, and some foods that are fortified with Vitamin D like orange juice, milk and yogurt but it is very difficult to get enough Vitamin D from diet alone.



Everybody over 50 should be taking Vitamin D

Experts recommend that everybody over the age of 50 eat a diet that is rich in calcium, exercise daily and take a Vitamin D supplement (800 IU to 2000 IU) every day to help prevent falls and fractures.

What is Vitamin D?

Vitamin D, also known as the Sunshine Vitamin, is produced by our skin when it is exposed to ultraviolet rays from the sun. As we age, our skin doesn't make Vitamin D very well and, in Canada, we often don't get much sun exposure, especially in the winter. Also, sunscreen with an SPF of 8 or more blocks Vitamin D producing UV rays.

Ask your Doctor or Pharmacist which supplement is right for you.



STAY
STRONG
and
STAY
HEALTHY

WANT TO LEARN MORE?

Check out these resources

Canadian Physiotherapy Association (CPA):

An association that represents over 14,000 rehabilitation professionals. They educate and advocate in the community to enable their members to better serve Canadians.

Finding Balance Ontario:

An Ontario campaign promoting strategies for older adults to reduce their risk of falls. They offer a variety of tools and resources to educate about falls prevention and help seniors maintain their independence.

Osteoporosis Canada:

A national organization that serves, educates, and supports people who have, or are at risk of having, osteoporosis. They have developed tools and resources to help prevent or combat osteoporosis.

Public Health Agency of Canada:

A government agency created to help protect the safety and health of all Canadians. They focus on preventing chronic diseases and injuries, and respond to public health emergencies.

UnlockFood.ca (formerly EatRightOntario.ca):

A website developed by Dietitians of Canada that focuses on healthy eating for all ages as well as chronic disease prevention. Their website contains nutritional information and other healthy eating tools.