



Slips/Falls Prevention Strategy

This program is to provide awareness, prevention strategies and education to employees, students and individuals in service, in reducing their risk of slips/falls in any environment such as the workplace, home, community.

The Learning Outcomes...

You will discover the answers to the following questions

- Why is slips/falls prevention important?
- How can the risk of falling be reduced?

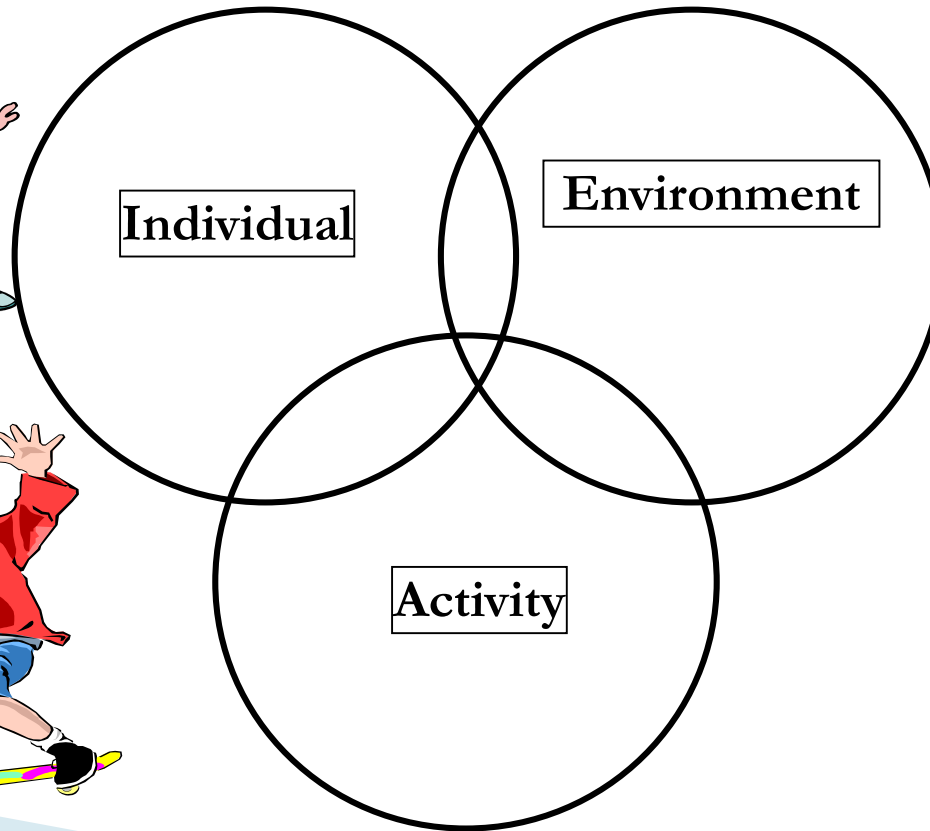
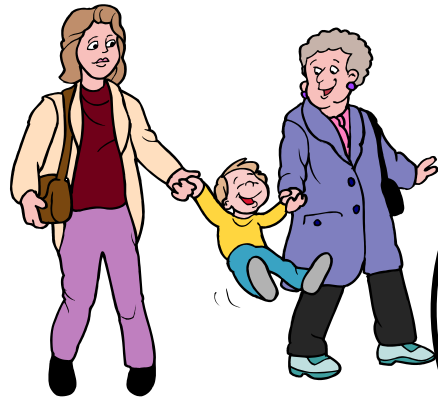
You will develop the skills to:

- Identify the risks/hazards
- Support others in managing their risk of falling.



Introduction

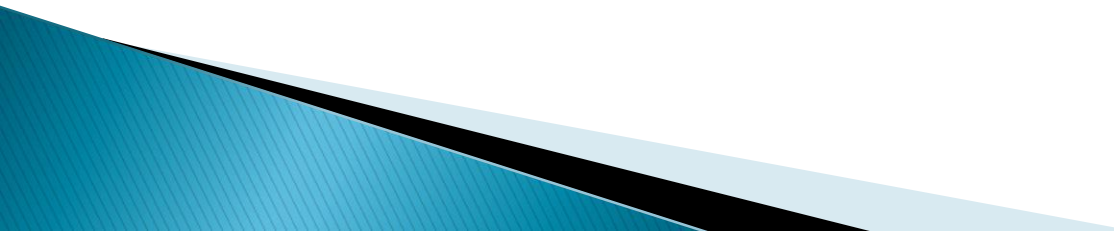
In every workplace, home and community situation you will need to remember the following factors:



These factors are interrelated and must be considered.

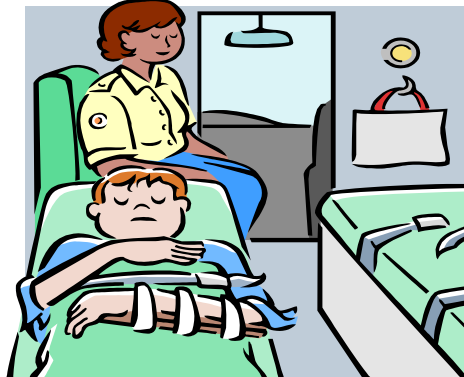
You must determine the most acceptable solutions for problems stemming from these factors.

Improved outcomes can be achieved by:


- **Changing the environment**
 - **Identifying potential hazards & hazards**
 - **Choosing a different way to do the activity**
 - **Increasing people's capacity to do things**
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WHAT IS A FALL?

A fall is an event which results in a person coming to rest inadvertently on the ground or floor or other lower level.



Possible consequences of falls

- Sometimes a person is unable to get help after they have fallen.
 - 5 – 10% of falls result in a fracture, the most common being a broken hip.
 - Reduced mobility.
 - Decreased independence and increased dependence on others.
 - Fear of falling.
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Possible consequences of falls

- Loss of confidence
- Decreased ability to participate in activities, work and enjoy life
- Hospitalization
- Death



Falls - Risk Factors

There is a wide range of risk factors that may result in a fall.

Many of them relate to the normal ageing process or particular medical conditions.

Others are connected with the behaviour of the person and the environment they live or work in.

These risk factors interplay with each other.



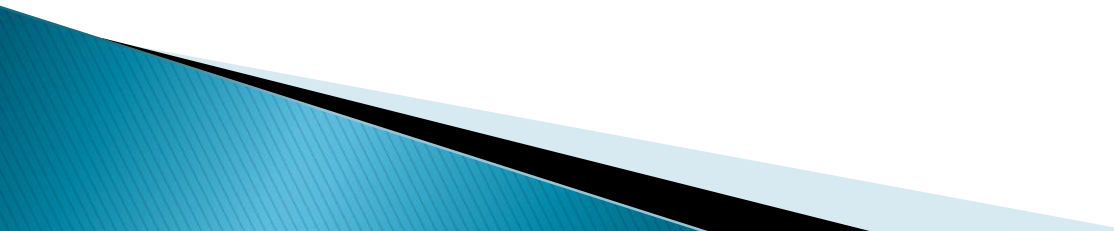
The more risk factors a person has, the more likely they are to fall.

It makes sense therefore, that the more things a person does to eliminate or reduce their risks, the less likely they are to fall.

Falls prevention research has shown this to be the case.



Risk factors have been grouped into the following categories

- 1. Activity**
 - 2. Balance**
 - 3. Footwear**
 - 4. Health Factors**
 - 5. Eyes**
 - 6. Medication**
 - 7. Environment**
- 

REMEMBER...



We often think that falls are simply caused by things that make us slip or trip, like a loose mat or uneven step.

Many falls can be prevented.

Identifying RISK factors is the first step to slips/falls prevention.

RISK FACTOR 1-Activity

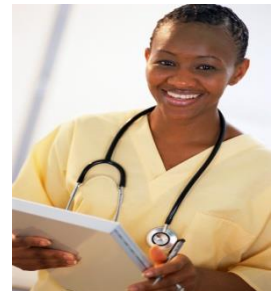
ACTIVITY - Muscle weakness caused through lack of exercise or physical activity. Exercise that focuses on developing strength and balance is one of the most important ways of reducing the risk of falling.

RISK: Lack of exercise leads to muscle weakness and increases the chance of falling.



RISK MANAGEMENT-Activity

- Encourage people to keep fit and active.
- Participate in everyday activities such as personal care, home and leisure activities.
- Encourage people to have a medical check-up prior to commencing any physical activity.



RISK FACTOR 2-Footwear & Foot Disorders

Improper footwear and foot disorders can lead to slips and falls.

FOOT DISORDERS:

- Circulatory problems in the lower legs and feet
- Diabetes
- Arthritis
- Toenail problems
- Skin conditions



What are the Risks?

- Untreated foot problems
- Inability to care for feet
- Inappropriate footwear/unsafe shoes

Good footwear is essential to everyone. When individuals have an underlying foot problem:

- Advice from a specialist such as a podiatrist and/or specialist fitter may be needed to assist with the selection of the right type of shoe.

RISK MANAGEMENT-Clothing

CLOTHING: As individuals age, they can lose height through degeneration of the spine. Overlong trousers, dresses, etc. trailing on the floor can be a risk factor for falls.

- Individuals' clothing should be tailored to ensure they don't trail on the ground.

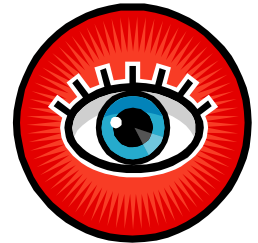
RISK FACTOR 3 - EYES

Vision Problems

Deteriorating eyesight can increase the risk of individuals falling

Vision problems may effect:

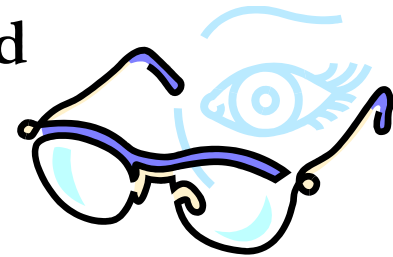
- How clearly people see
- How far they can see
- How much they can see
- Whether they can see clear differences (contrasts) between objects and/or backgrounds



RISK MANAGEMENT - EYES

Encourage people to

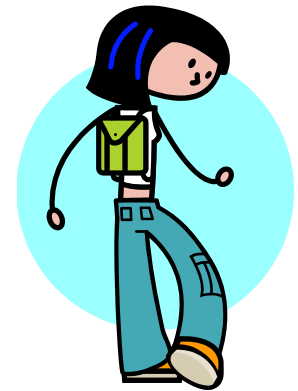
- Have their eyesight reviewed by an optometrist every 12-24 months
- Wear prescribed glasses as recommended
- Keep glasses clean
- Wear a hat or sunglasses
- Have adequate lighting
- Leave night light/or have a flashlight to move around the home more safely
- Make appropriate home modifications such as installing safety rails



RISK FACTOR 4 - Balance & Walking

Some physical changes that affect our balance and walking are:

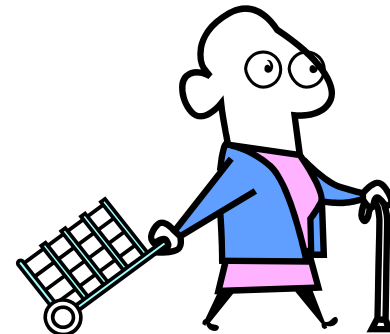
- Decreased muscle strength
- Slower walking and shorter steps
- Increased sway from side to side
- Decreased reaction time and reflexes
- Decreased awareness of body position
- Decreased sensation such as numbness in the feet



RISK FACTOR 4 - Balance & Walking

Activity status

- Serious decline in functional capacity is not an inevitable part of life
- Reducing activity status will increase the risk of falling



RISK FACTOR 4 - Balance and Walking

Medical conditions:

Some medical conditions that directly affect balance and walking are:

- Brain injury
- Stroke
- Parkinson's disease
- Alzheimer's disease
- Multiple Sclerosis
- Meniere's disease



REMEMBER...



The way a person walks will be affected by a number of factors, including:

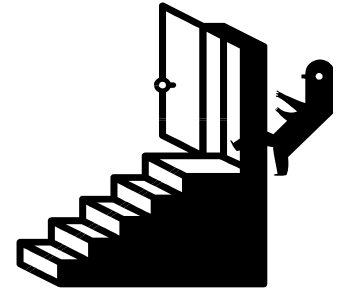
- **VISION**
- **BALANCE**
- **MEDICATION**
- **FOOTWEAR OR OTHER PROBLEMS WITH THEIR FEET**



RISK MANAGEMENT

Encourage individuals to :

- Keep as fit and healthy as possible
- Seek appropriate treatment for medical conditions
- Seek advice regarding mobility aids
- Have handrails installed on steps or stairs and in bathroom areas
- Take their time when moving from a lying to sitting or sitting to standing position



RISK MANAGEMENT

REMEMBER:

Seek advice from your supervisor when determining, managing and preventing risk factors associated with slips and falls.



RISK FACTOR 5- MEDICATIONS

Side effects or mix of medications

Evidence exists that the use of three (3) or more medications is linked to an increased risk of falling.

Side effects such as drowsiness, dizziness or confusion can increase the risk of falling.



RISK

Prescription and some over the counter medication can also lead to symptoms of:

- Drowsiness
- Dizziness
- Light headedness
- Confusion



RISK MANAGEMENT

- Encourage individuals to report any concerns they have about their medications to their doctor.
- Report any concerns you have about an individual's medication to your supervisor.
- Do not provide advice of about medications.
- Encourage people to inform their GP about any over the counter medications that they are taking or to call a Pharmacy or Telehealth



RISK FACTOR- 6

HEALTH FACTORS

Other Health Problems

It is well recognized individuals with many medical illnesses may experience more falls than active, healthy older people.

Individuals need to be encouraged to maintain a healthy lifestyle, including regular physical activity. Healthy eating and to participate in social or recreational activities.



RISK FACTOR 6 - OTHER HEALTH PROBLEMS

Medical conditions and illnesses that may cause other health issues include:

- Brain Injury
- Stroke
- Neuro-degenerative diseases such as Multiple Sclerosis, Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease
- Arthritis, Diabetes, Incontinence, Visual problems, Heart condition
- Changes in mental state such as depression



RISK FACTOR 6- HEALTH FACTORS

Lack of confidence - Fear of Falling

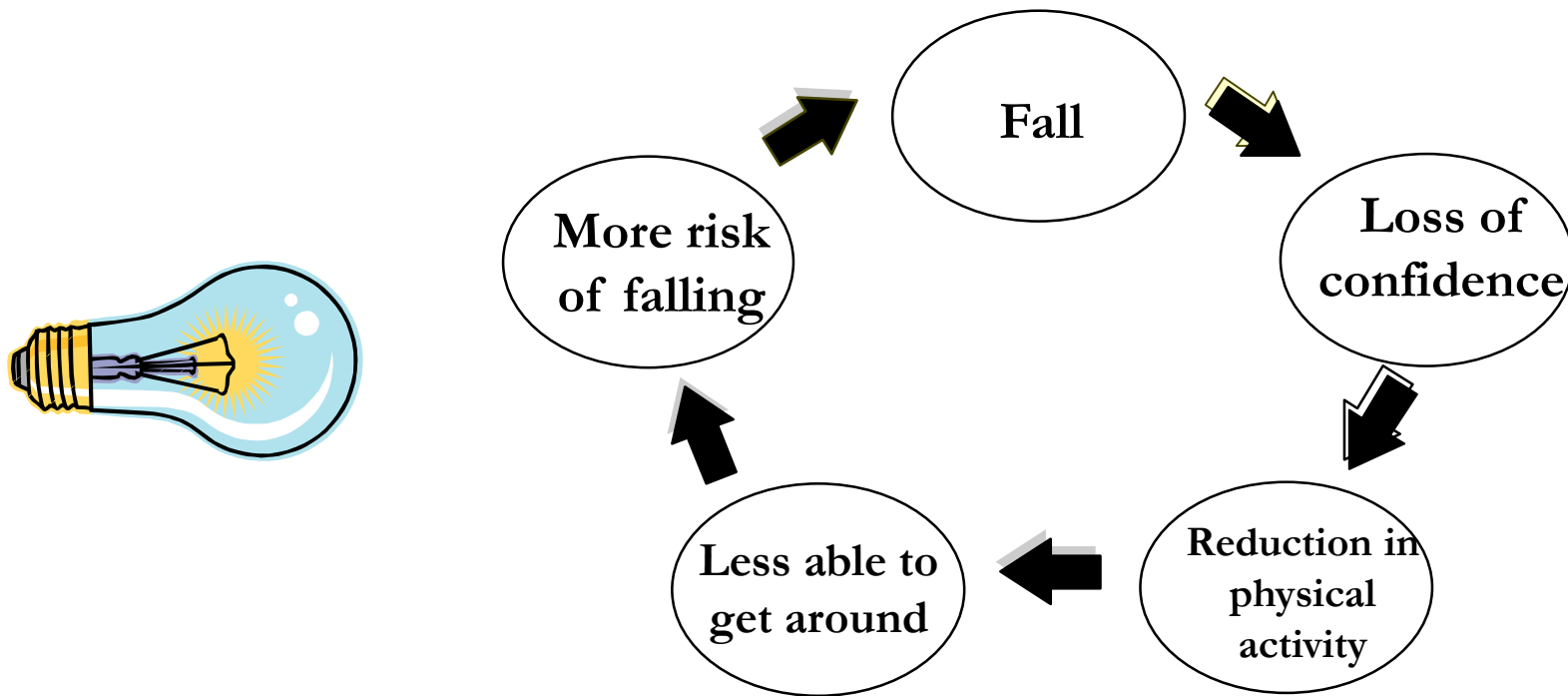
Often people who have had a fall (or know someone who has had a fall) feel less confident.

Reduction in activity can lead to a downward spiral, resulting in more falls.



RISK FACTOR 6 - Other Health Problems

Lack of confidence

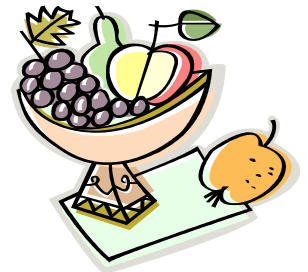


Over confidence and taking unnecessary risks
*(climbing on chairs to change light bulbs is a
classic example)* can result in falls.

RISK MANAGEMENT

A healthy lifestyle reduces the risk of falling:

- A healthy diet and fluid intake.
- Increases energy and vitality.
- It also reduces the risk of many illnesses, such as heart disease or diabetes. Missing meals can result in weakness and dizziness.
- Encourage individuals to keep fit, active and independent in their day to day living.



RISK MANAGEMENT- OTHER HEALTH ISSUES

REMEMBER:

- Increase knowledge and awareness of slips/fall risks and prevention.
- Social contact can reduce anxiety about fear of falling.
- Referral to a professional counsellor may assist.

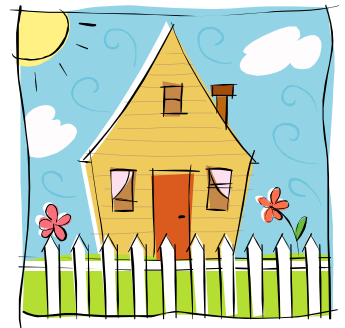


RISK FACTOR 7- ENVIRONMENT

Environmental Hazards in and around the home and public places

Slips/falls can occur both inside and outside the home. It is important to identify hazards.

Historically, the following environmental hazards have been the focus for slips/falls prevention interventions:

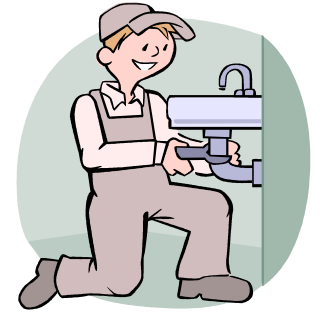


RISK FACTOR 7- ENVIRONMENT

- Poor lighting
- Loose rugs or carpet
- Electrical cords across walkways
- Cluttered furniture
- Slippery floor surfaces
- Steps with no rails
- Cracked uneven pathways
- Ice/snow
- Lack of grab rails in bathroom areas
- The height of furniture such as chairs or beds that are too high or low
- Leaf litter on garden paths
- Pets



RISK MANAGEMENT



Encourage people to:

- Seek advice about what modifications may be suitable for their home.
- Remove trip hazards such as loose mats, cords, rugs.
- Use non-slip mats in bathroom.
- Have grab rails installed in the toilet, bath or shower areas.

RISK MANAGEMENT

- Have hand rails installed next to steps or stairs.
- Improve lighting inside and outside the home.
- Have pathways and walkways maintained.
- Have access to night light when getting out of bed.
- Be aware of bed, chair and toilet heights being too high/low.
- Remove overhanging branches, pot plants, garden hoses or other objects that obstruct pathways.



RISK MANAGEMENT- PUBLIC PLACES

It is important that in a public place, individuals:

- Wear aids such as appropriately prescribed glasses and hearing aids.
- Use a walking aid if required.
- Wear safe footwear.
- Are aware of public toilet facility locations.
- Are aware of public seating and rest areas.



OH&Safety in the Workplace and the Home

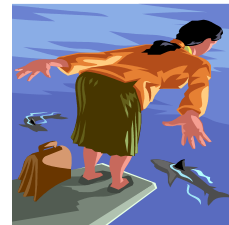
There is an important difference between using this model to manage risk in the workplace, and using it to help people prevent the risk of falling in their homes or community.

An employer usually has the power and control to audit hazards, and make the recommended changes.



OH&Safety in the Workplace and the Home

- Vista Centre can provide information and training to people to identify the risks, and learn prevention of slips/falls.
- Sometimes a person will find that a risk is acceptable to them, and will prefer to choose to live with it.



VCBIS' Processes

Identify/report potential hazards

- use the Good Catches Tracking Form
- use the Hazard Reporting Form – Part 1
- identify on the monthly building inspection form
- Use the home inspection forms
- scan your environment for potential hazards and identify this to your supervisor and coworkers

- report to maintenance for immediate action
 - use Special Incident Reports if it relates to individuals in service
 - use the Employee Related incident/Accident form
 - send an email
 - record in progress notes and log book
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