SAC
Speech-Language & Audiology Canada
Communicating care

Hearing Loss Increases the Risk of Falls

Audiologists can help.

Falls are the leading cause of hospitalization and injuries resulting in permanent disability for adults of all ages in Canada. 20% of injury-related deaths can be traced back to a fall. Even younger adults with hearing loss are at risk of falls.

- People with hearing loss fall up to 2.5 times more often than people with normal hearing.
- As hearing loss gets worse, the risk of falls increases. Even a small increase in hearing loss can significantly increase the risk of falls.

Researchers suspect that hearing loss increases falls because people with hearing loss may:

- **Be less aware** of their surroundings;
- **Have difficulty with spatial awareness** - figuring out where their body is in relation to the environment and objects around them; and
- **Use more effort to listen,** which can reduce focus on other things like walking, balance, etc.

What can you do to prevent falls?

- Make an appointment with an audiologist if you suspect hearing loss or balance issues
- Wear your hearing aids and other hearing technology recommended by your audiologist
- Make your home safer by reducing tripping hazards, using anti-slip flooring, installing handrails and grab bars in your bathroom, having good lighting, etc.
- Manage your health and medications with your primary care provider
- Check your vision and wear your eyeglasses as recommended
- Be aware of changes in sensation in your feet and legs

What can audiologists do?

Audiologists are health professionals who provide individualized care to people of all ages with hearing and balance issues. They can:

- Assess hearing and balance to identify people at risk for falls;
- Recommend hearing technologies and other solutions to optimize hearing and communication;
- Provide specific therapy and exercise programs, called vestibular rehabilitation, to improve balance and prevent falls; and
- Make referrals for further medical review e.g. Ear-Nose-Throat (ENT) specialist.

? Find an audiologist near you at: speechandhearing.ca.