

Calvary Community Care See Your Way Safe

Falls and Injury Prevention – How not to fall for it



Good eyesight is important so you can maintain your safety and independence. Your eyes not only allow you to see obstacles and judge steps, they help you to keep your balance.

Changes to eyesight can be gradual and can sometimes go unnoticed. From the age of 40, your eyesight gradually worsens and this can lead to an increased risk of falling.

By the age of 65 we all need three times more light to see than we did at 20 and our eyes:

- Take longer to adjust to sudden changes in light and dark.
- Are more sensitive to glare.
- Are less able to judge distance and depth, for example on steps.

What can you do every day?

- Choose glasses to suit what you are doing – distance glasses when walking, and reading glasses when reading.
- Take extra care on stairs, steps, step ladders and uneven ground if you wear bifocals or multi-focals (graded lenses) – when looking through the lower half it can be difficult to judge where to put your feet.
- Keep glasses clean.
- Pause, and give your eyes time to adjust when moving from dark into light or light into dark.
- Before getting up at night, turn on a bedside light. Keep your glasses within easy reach and use a torch if needed.
- Wear a wide brimmed hat and sunglasses to reduce glare when outside.
- When walking, scan the area for hazards such as uneven surfaces.

Is there anything else you can do?

- Have your eyesight and glasses checked by an optometrist at least once every two years and yearly by your doctor.
- If you notice changes in your eyesight, make an appointment with your doctor or optometrist. Early detection of eye problems can prevent further damage.
- Clearly mark the edges of steps with coloured strips so that they can be seen at all times, day and night.
- Ensure that all walking areas are well lit (16 or 20 watt energy saving, 75 or 100 watt incandescent globes are recommended).

Who can help?

CCC local service centre for information, support and advice.

Your doctor can check your eyes and refer you to appropriate health professionals or any services for which you may be eligible.

My Aged Care gives you access to a range of information and support which can be delivered to you in your home. It is for people 65yrs+, or 50yrs+ for an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person.
www.myagedcare.gov.au or ph. 1800 200 422.

Optometrists can help improve your vision with the correct prescription lenses and check for eye disease.

Vision Australia is a national provider of blindness and low vision services in Australia. They work in partnership with Australians who are blind or have low vision to help them achieve the possibilities they choose in life.
<http://www.visionaustralia.org/about-us/who-we-are-and-what-we-do> or ph. 1300 84 74 66.

Assistance for blind or vision impaired people in your state
(e.g. Royal Society for the Blind).

References

SA Falls and Injury Prevention Fact Sheet 2
'Eyesight and Walking'
<http://bit.ly/2ovMWXw>

See Clearly to Prevent Falls (poster)
<http://bit.ly/2nBBZPI>

Revised and re-published by the Commonwealth of Australia 2011
Don't Fall For It - A guide to preventing falls for older people
<http://bit.ly/2ovW0vz>

Need support? Calvary Community Care can support safe, independent living at home with a variety of services and expert advice. Call 1300 66 00 22 for more information.