Answers to Identify the risks on page 2 :

1. Flower pot on the bookcase
2. Left hand on the armchair
3. Standing on toes on the table
4. Flower pot on the coffee table
5. Water on the floor
6. Warped carpet
7. Cat in the staircase
8. Telephone and wire on the carpet
9. Shoes on the carpet
10. Ball on the floor
11. Extension cord in doorway
12. Raised doorway threshold

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Preventing falls at home

Agence de la santé et des services sociaux de Lanaudière
Québec

Centre de santé et de services sociaux du Sud de Lanaudière

Centre de santé et de services sociaux du Nord de Lanaudière

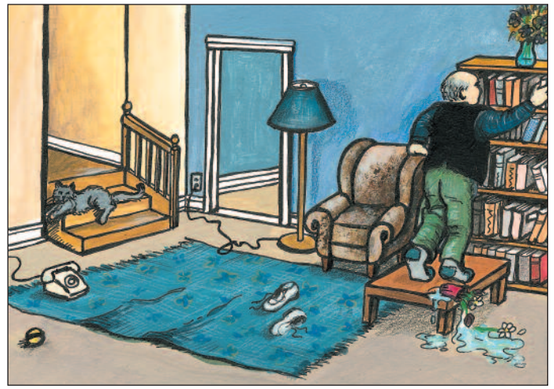
Are you at risk of falling ?
Answer these few questions

1. Are you over 65 years old ?	**Yes**	**No**
2. Over the past twelve months, have you come close to falling ?	**Yes**	**No**
3. Did you fall during the course of the past twelve months ?	**Yes**	**No**
4. Do you have low blood pressure ?	**Yes**	**No**
5. Do you have trouble with your eyesight ?	**Yes**	**No**
6. When you drink alcohol, do you take three or more drinks (beer, wine or liquor) ?	**Yes**	**No**
7. Do you take four or more different medications every day ?	**Yes**	**No**
8. Do you have a tendency to lose your balance when you walk around in your home ?	**Yes**	**No**
9. Do you think that the actual layout of your home could cause you to fall ?	**Yes**	**No**

ANSWERS

- If you have answered **yes 8 or more times,** you are among the people very likely to sustain a fall.
- If you have answered **yes 4 to 7 times**, you are among the people likely to sustain a fall.
- If you have answered **yes 3 or less times,** you are not immuned to falling and you should still be preoccupied.

IDENTIFY THE HAZARDS



Answers on page page 8

Source : Thibodeau C. et D. Maltais (1987). *Prévention des chutes à domicile pour les personnes âgées. Guide pédagogique.* DSC HGM, Mai, Annexe 5.

You can prevent falls :
modify certain habits

- Slowly rise from bed, an armchair or a chair in order to avoid a drop of arterial blood pressure.
- Wear low heel shoes with anti-skid soles.
- Avoid long clothing.
- Avoid moving while carrying heavy objects or objects that block your view.
- Identify every task that presents a risk of fall and perform it safely.
- Use a solid stepladder covered with anti-skid coating.
- Take your medicine as prescribed and be aware of it's side effects.
- Avoid the consumption of alcohol or drink moderately.
- Remove objects that hinder your movements or that clutter the rooms.
- Alternate sitting and standing tasks.
- Exercise regularly, eat healthy food and sufficiently (follow the Canadian Nutritional Guide) and drink a lot of water.
- Have a telephone and a flashlight close at hand.
- Leave a list of emergency numbers on the telephone.
- If you live alone :
  - ask a person of your surroundings to call you or visit you every day ; otherwise plan the installation of a security system.

In the event of a fall

▶ HOW TO GET UP

If you were able to walk before the fall and you do not feel any pain, here is a simple way to stand up safely.

1. Lie on your back.

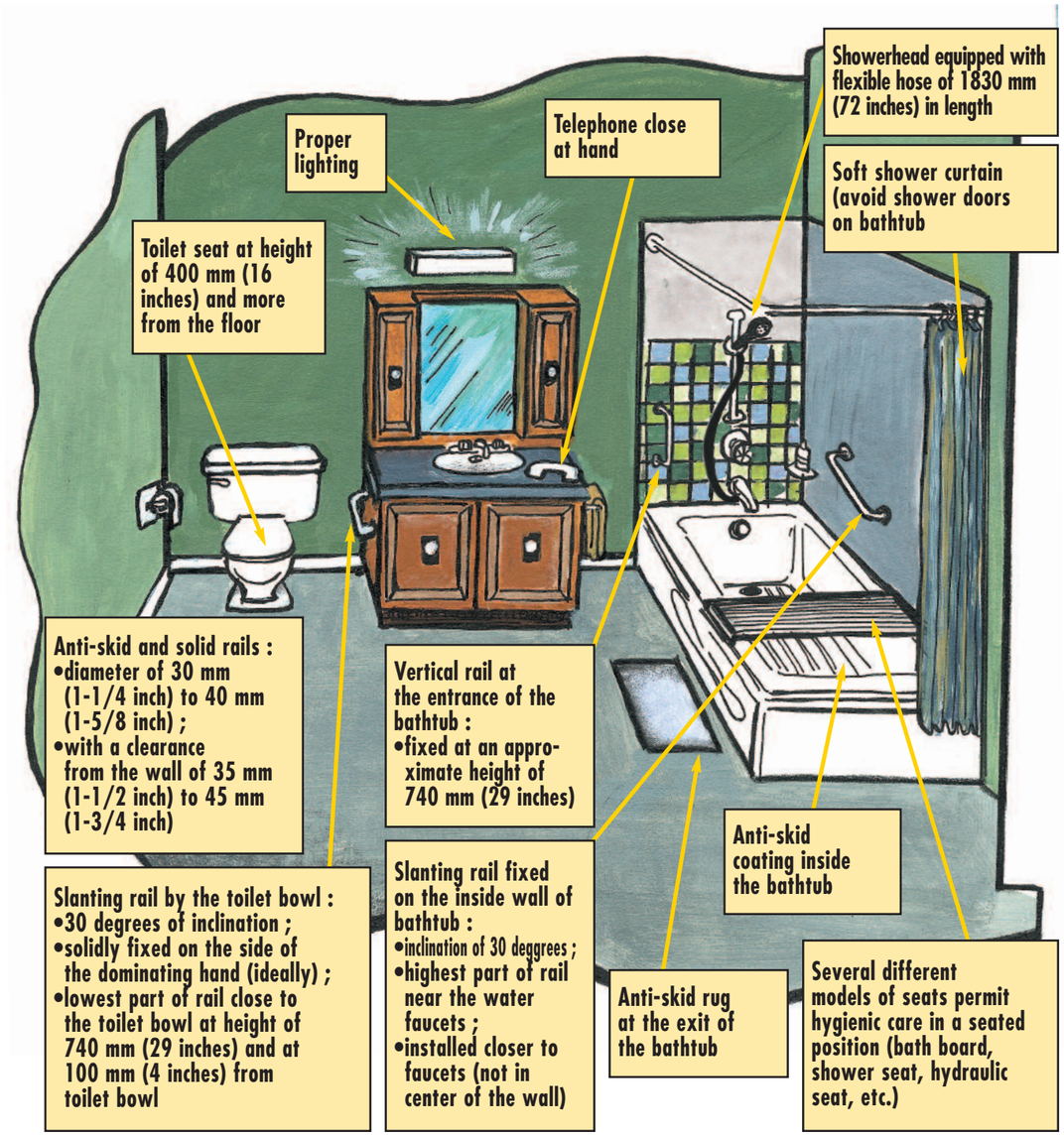
2. Turn on your belly or on your side.

3. Raise yourself on your elbows and knees.

4. Raise yourself while holding on to a fixed object and help yourself with your arms while gradually standing up.

Source : (Adapted from) Centre hospitalier Cooke (1987). *Les chutes chez la personne âgée.* Juin.

Example of safe indoor layout



Source : (Adapted from) Cloutier S., Lefebvre C. et al. (1990). *Mieux vivre à domicile sans chute. Guide d'aménagement sécuritaire conçu pour les aînés.* CLSC Drummond, 4e trimestre, p. 13.

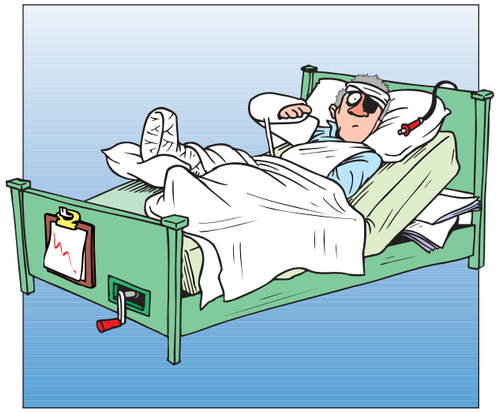
Did you know that ?

- **The risk of a fall increases with age.**
- Every year, **one person out of three, 65 years or older** and living **at home**, sustains a fall.
- One person 65 years or older out of seven (15%) is a victim of **repeated falls**.
- Four falls out of ten are caused by a **hazard** present **at home** (objects, staircase, snow, others).
- Falls represent the **principal cause of accidental death** among people 65 years or older.

And the consequences ?

A FALL OFTEN LEADS TO CONSEQUENCES :

- nearly one fall out of ten causes serious injuries (the most frequent being **a hip fracture** with 45 % of hospitalization cases) ;
- sometimes **injuries** that may cause death or other health problems (pain, disability, etc.) ;
- a **loss of self confidence** (fear of another fall) ;
- a **restriction** in your activities and movements ;
- a **dependency** towards those near to you and your surroundings.



PRÉVENTING FALLS IS IMPORTANT :
YOUR FUTURE AUTONOMY AND YOUR QUALITY OF LIFE DEPEND ON IT

You can prevent falls :
plan your home !

ENTRANCE TO YOUR HOME, INDOORS AND OUTDOORS STAIRWAYS

- Balconies and steps covered with an anti-skid finish.
- Rugs and doormats well fixed, one colour only.
- Mailbox at the proper height and not in the stairway.
- Balconies and stairways well lit.
- Stairways with two ramps solidly fixed and longer than the stairway.
- Steps all the same height and the same depth.
- Contrasting colour on the edge of the first and last step.
- Framework or shelf on interior stairway walls at least 1950 mm (77 inches) higher than the step or the landing.
- No objects cluttering the steps.
- Door leading to the basement opening towards the inside of the room.
- On and off switch at the top and at the bottom of the inside stairway.

KITCHEN

- Articles used most often placed close at hand (shelves, hooks under or close to the cupboards).
- Avoid using the cupboards above the stove.
- Have close at hand a solid stepladder or a small bench (228 mm or 9 inches).

LIVING ROOM

- A solid armchair of a good height, not too deep, with armrests.

BATHROOM

- Hand rail close to the toilet, on the walls of the bathtub or shower (never lean on the towel rack or the soap carrier).
- Extensible showerhead of adjustable height with a hand control.
- Anti-skid carpet or coating at the bottom and at the exit of the bath or shower.
- Storage space at accessible height.
- Shower seat or heightened toilet seat (person with loss of autonomy).

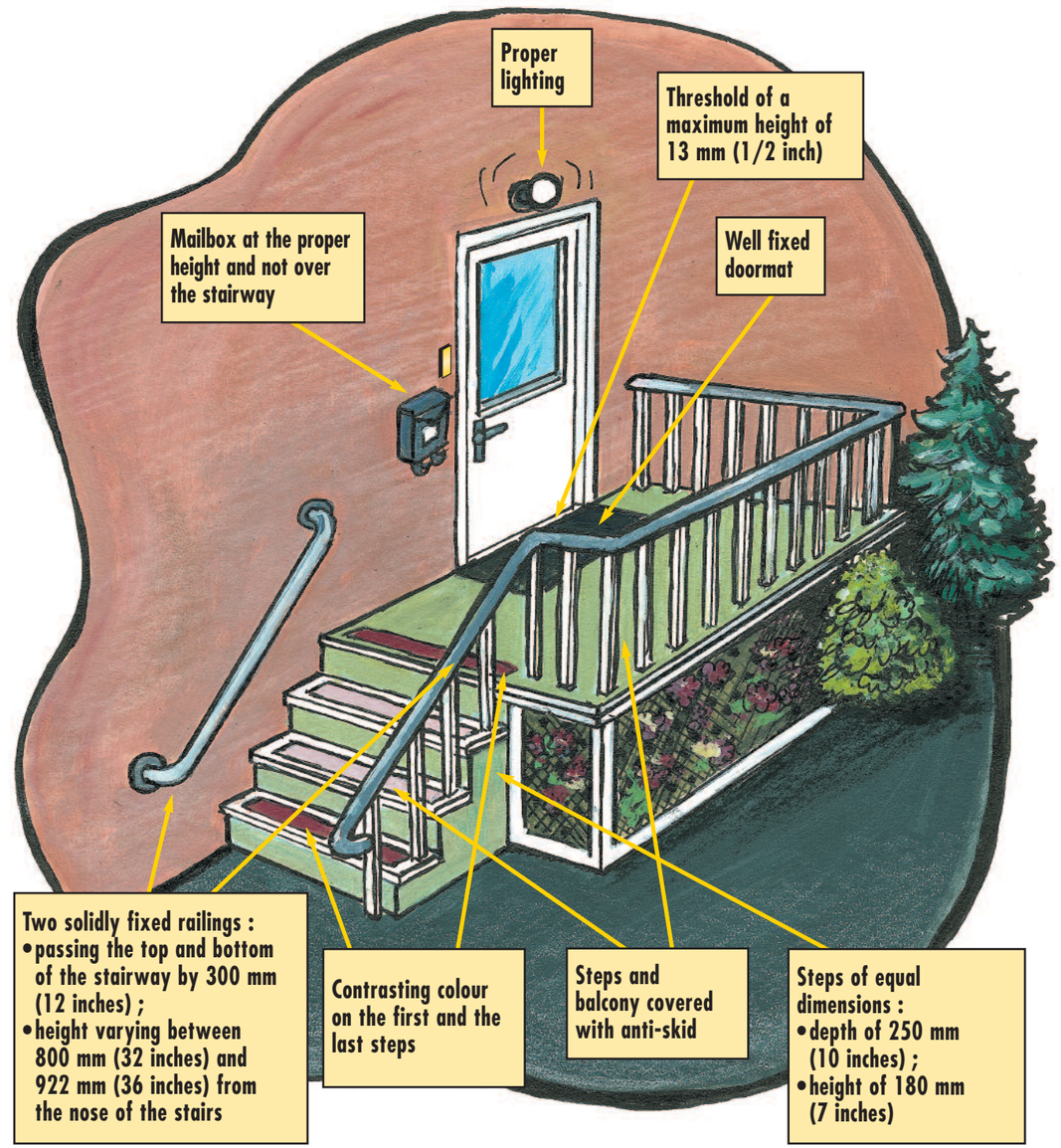
BEDROOM

- Telephone, lamp and clock close at hand or on bedside table.
- Knee high bed with firm mattress.
- In the closet : shelves, baskets, hangers within reach.
- Chair to allow one to sit while dressing.

IN EACH ROOM

- Carpets or rugs fixed solidly.
- Thresholds removed or leveled.
- Anti-skid floor or, if need be, a coat of anti-skid product.
- Good lighting, day and night.
- Night light in the most frequently used rooms and hallways.
- Electric outlets close at hand.
- Electric and telephone wires well fixed.
- Easy access to doors and windows.
- Light switch at the entrance of the room.
- If need be, ramp on the indoor hallways.
- Wireless phone close at hand.

Example of safe outdoor layout



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