

# TAKE ACTION TO STAY MOBILE AND INDEPENDENT

## Don't let your feet trip you up

Foot problems, ill-fitting shoes, shoes with minimal contact with the ground or poor grip may upset your balance and change the way you walk, putting you at risk of falling. If you have any foot pain or foot problems, see your doctor or podiatrist. A fall can be life changing for a person, affecting their independence and wellbeing.

### Are you at risk of falls?

1. Have you had a fall in the past 12 months?
2. Are you on four or more medications?
3. Do you have a fear of falling?

If you answered **YES** to any of these questions, you are at risk of a fall. Please talk to your health professional.

The good news is that most falls can be prevented by:

- being active, improving your balance and walking tall
- having your eyesight checked regularly
- getting your medicines reviewed regularly
- managing your health and nutrition
- keeping your home clutter-free and well lit
- good foot care and safe footwear.

### Shoe shopping tips

- If you have lost or gained weight – you may need new shoes to fit properly.
- Don't shop for shoes when your feet hurt.
- Feet tend to swell during the day, so try shoes on mid-afternoon, take your usual socks or stockings and orthotics with you.
- Have shoes properly fitted.
- Shoes should fit properly when you buy them. They should not need to be stretched or broken in. Don't be pressured by sales staff – if the shoes are not right don't buy them.
- Try both shoes on, buy for fit not size. Walk around on different surfaces in the shop to ensure that the shoes fit properly and the heels don't slip.
- A long-handled shoe horn may help.

## Safe shoes should have:

**A firm heel cup** which provides support when walking.

**Low wide heels with rounded edges** which provides more contact with the ground and prevents slipping.



**Correct length** allowing normal foot function.

**Laces, buckles or velcro fastenings** that hold the foot more firmly.

**Wide and deep toe box** allowing plenty of room for toe movement and comfort.

**Thin soles with tread** enabling your feet to "read" the underlying surface and prevent slipping.