



# HEALTH CAPSULE | No.62 | 2018



## NOVEMBER, FALL PREVENTION MONTH

Every year in Quebec, approximately 30 percent of persons aged 65 and over suffer a fall while living at home, which represents nearly 400,000 cases. Falls can have very serious consequences for the individuals who experience them and also for their families, in addition to incurring high costs for our society.

Most falls don't result in serious injuries, but even those cases can have major consequences, for example if a person living alone cannot get back up after falling down. Approximately one third of individuals who suffer a fall are unable to get back up without help.

In about 10 percent of cases, a fall results in serious injuries, most commonly fractures of the lower limbs. All too often, a hip fracture means a loss of autonomy and having to be placed in a long-term care facility. Even worse than that, approximately 20 percent of elderly individuals who suffer a hip fracture pass away within a year of their fall.

Since many falls can be avoided, fall prevention campaigns are designed to raise people's awareness of the consequences of a fall, and giving them tools to prevent them. The ultimate goal of this campaign is to preserve a senior's autonomy, mobility and health.

How can we prevent falls at home? Here are some factors to take into consideration:

- In order to clearly see obstacles, it's important to get regular eye exams and to change eyeglasses when necessary.
- At home, make sure to keep hallways free of any obstacles by removing unnecessary objects and rugs on which a person could trip. Do the same with staircases and the entranceway.
- Proper lighting can also help us see obstacles more clearly and therefore avoid them.
- Bathroom grab bars are very useful for getting up from the toilet or bathtub. If they aren't sufficient help for getting out of the tub, it is best to have a shower instead. A specially designed chair can be placed in the shower if needed.
- In order to walk steadily, it is essential to wear proper footwear. In the winter, wearing cleats can help prevent slipping on icy surfaces.
- Some types of medication can increase the risk of a fall by causing dizziness or drowsiness. When taking a new medication, speak to the pharmacist to make sure to understand its effects and take precautions if necessary.
- It's a good idea to avoid any sudden changes in position (for example, getting up from the table suddenly), because this can cause temporary dizziness that could result in a loss of balance.
- As the old saying goes, there's no use in running! When moving around indoors or outdoors, it's best to take our time.

For more information on preventing falls, visit <http://fallpreventionmonth.ca/>

Source : [novembresanschute.ca](http://novembresanschute.ca)

## TIME CHANGE ON NOVEMBER 4

Time change in winter can affect our sleep, our appetite, our mood, our energy and our concentration.

To counteract these unwanted effects, follow these tips:

- Quickly adopt the new schedule.
- Enjoy natural light.
- Try light therapy.
- Consider melatonin.

These two extra tips should help you transition smoothly:

- Set all your clocks at the correct time before falling asleep.
- Take a nap if you feel uncomfortable.



Source : Cécile Moreschi, *Mieux vivre le changement d'heure*

## OVERWHELMED? LIVE MINDFULLY!

Mindfulness can be defined as a way to deliberately bring attention to the present, such as moments, thoughts, emotions, physical sensations and surroundings without making judgment or putting labels. It is a matter of living fully in the present rather than to relive the past or anticipate the future.

### Do you know the benefits of mindfulness?

Mindfulness exercises can be useful to:

- Optimize your physical and mental well-being;
- Better react to stressful events;
- Improve your cognitive functions such as attention and concentration;
- Become aware of your automatic behaviour and widen the scope of choices on your actions;
- Learn more about yourself, your ways of thinking and reacting, by making nonjudgmental observations of the present moment;
- Develop a greater acceptance and kindness towards yourself and others.

### Demystify false beliefs

#### *How do I know if I can meditate?*

*Answer:* Mindfulness meditation simply involves staying in touch with your breath (or any other object of attention chosen as the sounds or sensations of the body). If you can breathe, you can meditate!

#### *I try to practice mindfulness, but I feel that it does not work because I continue to feel stress/anxiety.*

*Answer:* Mindfulness is not aimed directly at eliminating stress and anxiety. These phenomena are part of life and are even useful in certain situations. Over time, mindfulness allows us to change our way to respond to stressful and/or anxiety-provoking events to limit their negative impact on our well-being.

### How to practice it?

- 1. We live the moment:** We take the time to observe our inner state, our feelings and emotions of the moment. We greet them in a benevolent way, without judgment or without trying to control them.
- 2. We reconnect with our senses:** For example, in the shower, we pay attention to the water flowing on our skin, the smell of soap, etc.
- 3. We stop:** During a break, we pay special attention to our breathing. When a thought comes up, we let it go.
- 4. We dive into ourselves:** Rather than suffering waiting moments (red lights, traffic, lines), we plunge into ourselves and we bring some calm.
- 5. We eat in full awareness:** We take the time to chew and taste food, to be attentive to textures and flavors, to listen to our feelings of hunger and satiety.
- 6. We reconnect with our body:** When walking or using a staircase, we pay attention to our physical sensations.
- 7. We learn to live in silence:** Every day, we plan moments in the most complete silence. We close all the technology devices and we cut off as much ambient noise as possible.
- 8. We give a break to the action mode:** As often as possible, we drop the mode «to do» to enter the mode «to be».
- 9. We take our time:** Rather than hurrying up on the way back from work, we take the time to fully experience this transition period, to feel this moment.
- 10. We observe our environment:** We pay a different attention to the environment we are familiar with: we focus on the brightness of light, the outside temperature, the color of the trees, the bird singing.



Sources : Université Laval, *Mon équilibre UL*. Amélie Cournoyer, *Pleine conscience : des exercices à essayer*