# Day 1: The Legend of the Fall

- The World Health Organization defines a **fall** as an event which results in a person coming to rest inadvertently on the ground or floor or other lower level

- Falls are very problematic and costly:
  - Falls are the leading cause of death in people 65 years of age or older
  - Falls cost the Canadian healthcare system $2 billion a year
  - Falls often lead to hospitalization and/or relocation to long term care and a loss of independence
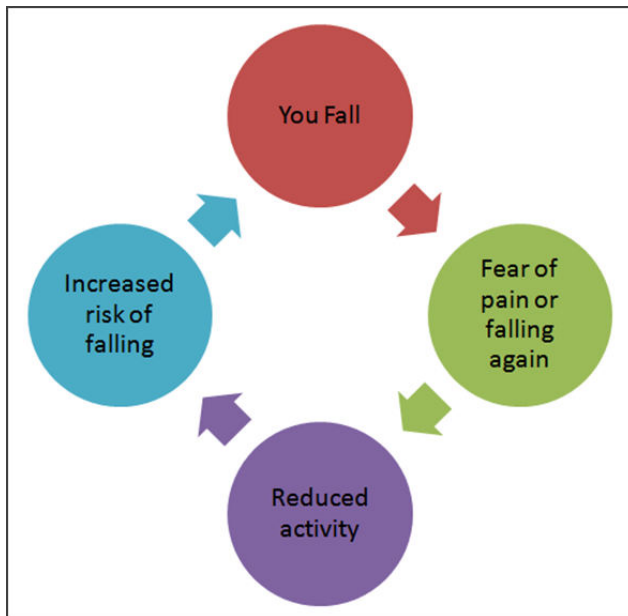
Falling can start a vicious cycle which can lead to more falls

The good news is that most falls can be PREVENTED!

- You can reduce your risk of falling by:
  - Modifying your behaviour
  - Having annual appointments with your doctor
  - Discussing your medications with your pharmacist
  - Exercising at least three times a week at a moderate intensity

- Certain medical conditions can be risk factors for a fall:
- Any condition that interferes with your vision, hearing, sensation (in feet), cognition, bone strength, bladder function, blood pressure, mood, heart, posture, balance or walking abilities can put us at risk of a fall
- Examples:
    ◊ Low blood pressure: Can make us dizzy
    ◊ Incontinence: Causes us to rush to the bathroom
    ◊ Osteoporosis: Leads to weak bones
    ◊ Vision problems: Decreases our abilities to see our environments (and any potential hazards)

- Since many chronic illnesses cannot be completely cured, the key is to manage your health issues to the best of your ability to reduce a fall
    ◊ This means you are taking the correct medication for each condition, and trying to alleviate any symptoms that may cause a fall

Some Examples:

- Visit your doctor at least once a year to properly manage your health
- Visit your optometrist regularly to ensure that your vision is as good as it can be
- Ensure that you get your blood pressure checked by a nurse or doctor every 3 months
- Visit a pharmacist to review your medications to ensure that you're taking your medications properly

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