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Intercare Corporate Group Inc. - *“The Heart of Excellence”*



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Falls Facts

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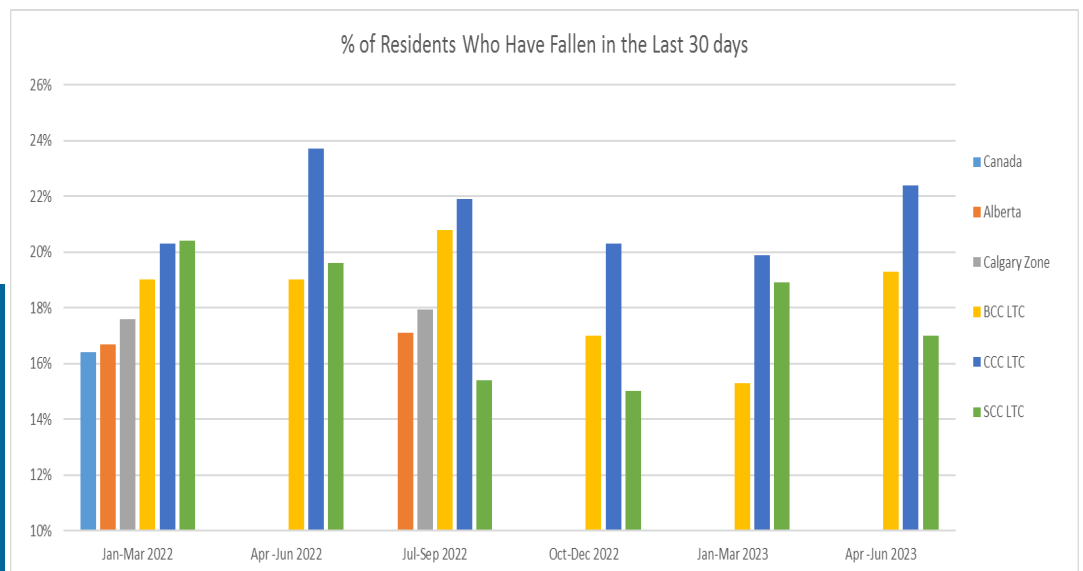
Falls are the leading cause of injury among older Canadians, with one (1) in three (3) seniors experiencing one (1) or more falls each year.

- ◆ Falls cause eighty-five percent (85%) of seniors' injury-related hospitalizations and ninety-five percent (95%) of all hip fractures.
- ◆ Over one-third of seniors are admitted to long-term care following hospitalization for a fall.
- ◆ The average Canadian senior stays in hospital for ten (10) days or longer for fall-related injuries, compared to any other cause.
- ◆ Fifty percent (50%) percent of all falls that lead to hospitalization happen at home.
- ◆ Forty-three percent (43%) of falls occur while walking on a non-slippery versus a slippery (icy/snowy) surface.
- ◆ Thirty-eight percent (38%) of fall injuries result in a broken bone or bones.
- ◆ Twenty to thirty percent (20-30%) of falls are preventable.
- ◆ Falls can result in chronic pain, reduced mobility, loss of independence and even death.

Risk Factors for Falls include:

- ◆ Weak muscles, especially in the legs.
- ◆ Poor balance causing unsteadiness on one's feet.
- ◆ Dizziness or lightheadedness.
- ◆ Black outs, fainting or loss of consciousness.
- ◆ Foot problems – including pain and deformities.
- ◆ Memory loss, confusion or difficulties with thinking or problem solving.

Fall Statistics for Intercare LTC Sites, Calgary Zone, Alberta & Canada



Fall Prevention

At Intercare, we are committed to promoting and maintaining resident independence and safety. Falls management, including the use of intervention strategies for residents who are at risk for falls, are important steps that enable us to work with residents / families to help reduce the risk of falls.

There are several reasons and / or combination of factors that contribute to resident falls. These may include: age, poor balance, muscle weakness, arthritis, poor eyesight or hearing, memory loss, depression, certain medications or change in medications, unsafe footwear and unfamiliar surroundings or environment.

Some of the ways that our staff work to help reduce the risk of falls for residents include:

- Helping residents settle in and keeping their surroundings safe;
- Assessing each resident's risk of falling using a "Falls Risk Identification Tool" and/or "Post Fall Review";
- Completing **fall risk assessments**:
 - ◊ When the resident is first admitted to the care home;
 - ◊ If the resident experiences a fall(s); and/or
 - ◊ If the resident's medical condition changes.
- Discussing and providing fall management / risk factors information;
- Discussing and providing fall intervention strategies, as required;
- Reviewing each resident's risk of falling, on a regular basis, with the members of the multidisciplinary care team that includes physicians, nursing and physical and occupational therapists; and
- Conducting 'falls rounds' on units in the care home with members of the full multidisciplinary care team to discuss identified trends and ways to help minimize resident falls.

Everyone has a role to play in managing falls, including residents. Here is what residents can do to help:

- Stay active each day, in as many ways as able.
- Always try to eat and drink well.
- Let staff know if feeling unwell or unsteady while walking.
- Sit down and rest when feeling tired.
- Do not rush (take time) when getting up from a sitting or lying down position.
- If staff recommend that assistance or supervision is needed when moving, be sure to ask staff for assistance and wait until they are able to help.
- If the use of a walking aid or walker is required, do not use furniture or walls for balance.
- Use the Call Bell when assistance is required and keep it within reach.
- Wear comfortable clothing that is not too long or loose.
- Whenever up and walking around, wear comfortable low heeled, non-slip shoes that fit well (NOT socks, slippers or sling-back shoes).
- Watch out for environmental hazards such as spills on the floor and/or clutter that could cause a fall.
- Let staff know about environmental hazards promptly once noticed.
- If wearing glasses, take special care if the glasses have bifocals or multi-focal lenses.

If a resident is unable to understand or retain information, it is particularly important that family members work in conjunction with staff in the management of falls. Here is what families can do to help:

- Share any information you have about past falls of your loved one with staff so that monitoring can be put in place as soon as possible.
- Discuss the use of Hip Protectors (provided by family), if recommended.
- Remind your loved one, on an on-going basis, about the importance of wearing proper footwear and asking staff for assistance.
- Support the use of fall strategies such as fall mats, if the use of one has been recommended.

Points of emphasis:

- *Restraints do not prevent falls*; rather, they increase risk of resident injury.
- *Intercare does not support the use of restraints for fall prevention* (i.e. seat belts that a resident cannot undo).
- *Bed and chair alarms do not prevent falls and are not considered a fall prevention strategy*; rather, they are used to alert staff who are nearby that a resident is attempting to reposition or move on their own, or has already fallen.

