Ideal Caregivers 4u

STAYING STEADY



Balance, Blood Sugar, & Safety for Seniors This Winter

Why Steady Matters This Winter



November changes the rhythm of a senior's day. Clocks fall back, and it's dark before dinner. Then the first ice shows up on the front steps.

For many older adults, this is when the risk of a fall quietly climbs. Falls are the leading cause of injury-related hospital stays for older Canadians. In fact, roughly one in three seniors falls each year.

Diabetes adds another layer. A dip in blood sugar can bring on dizziness. Over time, nerve changes can dull feeling in the feet. Vision changes can also make a stair edge or an icy patch harder to judge.

That's why this guide covers both. Balance and blood sugar are closely linked, and small daily habits help keep both of them steady.

How to Use This Guide

There are six short sections. Each one opens with a moment you might recognize. After that, you'll find why it matters, what families can do, and how professional support helps.

Each section ends with one simple thing to do this week. At the back, there are three printable tools to keep on the fridge.

You don't need to do everything at once. Pick one section, start there, and build from it.

A quick note: This guide is general information, not medical advice. Always follow the plan from your loved one's doctor, nurse, or diabetes educator.



1. The Room-by-Room Walk Through

Your dad has lived in the same house for forty years. He knows every step in the dark. That's exactly why nobody notices the hall runner that slides.

Why It Matters

Most falls happen at home, during everyday moments. Getting up at night. Stepping out of the tub. Reaching for a high shelf.
Familiar homes hide risks because no one really sees them anymore. A cord has always run there. The rug has always curled at the corner. Meanwhile, darker November evenings make every hazard harder to spot.

What Families Can Do

Walk the house at night

Turn off the main lights and follow the route from bed to bathroom. Notice where it gets dark, where cords cross the floor, and where a rug shifts underfoot. Seeing the house the way your loved one sees it at 2 a.m. changes everything.

Start with the bathroom

The bathroom is where many serious falls happen. Grab bars, a non-slip mat, a raised toilet seat, and a shower chair are simple fixes. Together, they make a big difference.

Clear the paths

Keep walkways wide and free of clutter. Move everyday items to waist height so no one needs a step stool. Finally, add plug-in night lights along the bedroom-to-bathroom route.

How Professional Support Helps

Our Senior Home Safety Specialists complete a detailed 250-point home safety assessment. They check entryways, stairs, bathrooms, lighting, and more.
Afterward, families get a clear list of what to fix first.
Our caregivers also keep an eye out during every visit. If something new becomes a hazard, they flag it early.

One thing to do this week:

Do the nighttime walk. Write down three things you notice.

2. Everyday Diabetes Routines



Mom says her numbers are "fine." But the meter's last reading was three days ago. And the pill organizer still has Tuesday evening's dose in it.

Why It Matters

Diabetes is managed in small daily habits. Meals, medications, blood sugar checks, and movement all work together. When one of them slips, blood sugar can swing without anyone noticing.

Winter tends to shake routines loose. Appetites change, and activity drops. Colds and flu come through, and holiday treats start appearing. Each of these can nudge blood sugar up or down.

What Families Can Do

Anchor the day

Tie medications and blood sugar checks to fixed moments, like breakfast and dinner. A routine linked to something that already happens is much easier to keep. A labelled pill organizer and a phone alarm help too.

Know the signs of highs and lows

Low blood sugar can look like shakiness, sweating, confusion, irritability, or dizziness. High blood sugar often shows up as extra thirst, frequent bathroom trips, tiredness, or blurry vision.

Keep the care team's plan for highs and lows somewhere visible. That way, everyone in the family knows what to do.

Keep a simple log

Write down readings, meals, and how your loved one is feeling. Patterns jump out quickly on paper. Bring the log to appointments, since it helps the doctor make better decisions. Tool 2 at the back of this guide is ready to print.

One thing to do this week:

Post the care team's low blood sugar plan on the fridge.

3. When Blood Sugar Affects Balance

He got up at 3 a.m. for the bathroom and felt lightheaded halfway down the hall. He blamed it on getting up too fast. Maybe. Or maybe it was his blood sugar.

Why It Matters

This is where our two themes meet. Low blood sugar can cause dizziness, weakness, and confusion. Each of those raises the chance of a fall.

Lows often happen overnight, when no one is watching. Some diabetes and blood pressure medications can add to lightheadedness. On top of that, older adults don't always feel the early warning signs of a low as clearly as they once did.

What Families Can Do

Ask about nighttime lows

Talk with the doctor or pharmacist about current medications. Ask whether any of them can cause lows, especially overnight. A medication review once a year is a smart habit for any senior.



Keep fast sugar close

Keep glucose tablets or juice at the bedside and in a coat pocket, as the care team recommends. When a low hits, the fix needs to be within reach, not down the stairs.

Slow the stand-up

Encourage a short pause before standing. Sit on the edge of the bed, feet flat, and count to ten. Then stand, holding something sturdy. This small habit protects against dizziness from any cause.

What Families Can Do

Our Awake Overnight Care puts a caregiver in the home who stays awake all night. They help with bathroom trips and watch for signs of a low. Families finally get to sleep, too.

One thing to do this week:

Put glucose tablets or juice on the bedside table.



4. Feet First

Her slippers are soft, open at the back, and fifteen years old. She loves them. They're also the riskiest thing she wears.

Why It Matters

Diabetes can damage the nerves in the feet over time. This is called neuropathy, and it reduces feeling. When you can't feel the floor well, your balance suffers.
Small cuts or blisters can also go unnoticed and heal slowly. Meanwhile, poor footwear is a common fall factor for every senior, with or without diabetes.

What Families Can Do

Check feet every day

Look for cuts, blisters, redness, swelling, or colour changes. A hand mirror on the floor makes it easier. Report anything new to the care team quickly, because small problems can grow fast.

Choose the right footwear

Look for a closed heel, a non-slip sole, and a snug fit. This matters indoors as much as outside. Swap floppy slippers for supportive house shoes, and avoid walking in socks on hard floors.

Keep up with foot care

Regular visits with a foot care nurse or chiropodist keep nails and skin healthy. Also, skip at-home fixes for corns or calluses. Those are best left to a professional.

How Professional Support Helps

Through our Personal Health Care services, caregivers help with bathing, drying between the toes, and daily foot checks. Many seniors can't easily see or reach their own feet, so this help matters.

When a caregiver spots a concern, they report it right away. That way, the family and care team can act early.

One thing to do this week:

Replace the old slippers with a pair that has a closed heel and grip.

5. Winter Outdoors

The driveway was clear at noon. By four o'clock it was dark, and the melt had turned to ice.



Why It Matters

Ice, snow, and early darkness make every trip outside riskier. Because of this, many seniors simply stop going out. That creates a different problem. Staying inside means less movement, weaker muscles, and more isolation. Weaker muscles, in turn, raise the risk of a fall indoors. For seniors with diabetes, cold feet with less feeling add one more concern.

One thing to do this week:

Book snow and ice clearing before the first big storm.

What Families Can Do

Fix the entryway

Install railings on both sides of the front steps. Add bright outdoor lighting on a timer or motion sensor. Inside the door, set up a sturdy mat and a chair for changing boots.

Line up snow and ice clearing now

Don't wait for the first storm. Arrange a service, a neighbour, or a family rotation today. Keep a pail of salt or grit right by the door, too.

Gear up for the season

Choose winter boots with deep tread. Add ice grips for outdoor walks, but take them off indoors. If your loved one uses a cane, an ice tip helps. Plan errands and outings for daylight whenever possible.

6. Cooking for Steady Blood Sugar

Tea and toast. It's what he makes most nights now, because cooking for one feels like too much work.

Why It Matters

Regular, balanced meals help keep blood sugar steady. Skipped meals raise the risk of lows. On the other hand, large, carb-heavy meals can send blood sugar high.

Seniors who live alone often eat less or lean on convenience foods. Good nutrition also protects muscle strength, and strong muscles are one of the best defences against falls.

What Families Can Do

Keep mealtimes regular

Aim for three meals at roughly the same times each day. Include snacks if the care plan calls for them. Most importantly, try not to let meals get skipped.

Try the plate method

Fill half the plate with vegetables. Then add a quarter protein, like fish, chicken, eggs, or beans. The last quarter is whole grains or starch. It's simple, it works for most meals, and there's nothing to count.

Cook once, eat twice

Batch-cook soups, stews, and casseroles. Freeze them in single portions with clear labels. Also keep easy protein on hand, like boiled eggs, canned fish, or yogurt.



One thing to do this week:

Batch-cook one freezer meal together this weekend.

If a Fall Happens

Even with good planning, falls can still happen. Knowing what to do keeps a scary moment from getting worse.

- **Stay calm.**

Take a breath. Don't rush to lift your loved one, because that can cause more injury.

- **Check first.**

Look for pain, bleeding, or trouble moving. If they hit their head, are hurt, or can't get up, call 911.

- **Get up slowly.**

If they're unhurt, help them roll to one side, then crawl to a sturdy chair. From there, they can kneel and rise slowly.

- **Check blood sugar.**

If they have diabetes, check their blood sugar. A low may have caused the fall.

- **Report it.**

Tell the doctor about every fall, even one without injury. A fall is often an early warning sign.

- **Consider a medical alert.**

A personal emergency response device lets your loved one call for help from anywhere in the home.

Coming home after a hospital stay

The first few weeks home are when the risk of another fall is highest. Our Hospital Discharge Program helps with that transition. We support everything from the ride home to setting up the house and daily care.

Tool 1: Room-by-Room Fall Check

Walk through the home with this list. Tick off each item once it's done.

✓	Entryways & Outdoors
☐	Railings on both sides of front steps
☐	Bright outdoor light on a timer or motion sensor
☐	Snow and ice clearing arranged
☐	Salt or grit kept by the door
☐	Chair and non-slip mat inside the entrance

✓	Stairs & Hallways
☐	Sturdy handrails on both sides of stairs
☐	Light switches at the top and bottom
☐	No clutter, cords, or loose rugs
☐	Night lights from bedroom to bathroom

✓	Bathroom
☐	Grab bars by the toilet and in the tub or shower
☐	Non-slip mat inside and outside the tub
☐	Shower chair or bench
☐	Raised toilet seat, if needed

✓	Bedroom, Kitchen & Living Areas
☐	Lamp within reach of the bed
☐	Glucose tablets or juice at the bedside (if diabetic)
☐	Everyday items stored at waist height
☐	Sturdy chairs with armrests
☐	Supportive, closed-heel footwear by the bed

Tool 2: Daily Steady Log

Fill in one row each day. Bring this page to medical appointments.

Date	Morning reading	Evening reading	Meals eaten	Meds taken	Feet checked	How they felt
				☐	☐	
				☐	☐	
				☐	☐	
				☐	☐	
				☐	☐	
				☐	☐	
				☐	☐	

Signs of a LOW: Shaky, sweaty, dizzy, confused, irritable, sudden hunger, pale skin.

Signs of a HIGH: Very thirsty, frequent bathroom trips, tired, blurry vision, headache.

Our care team's plan:

Tool 3: Winter Ready Checklist

✓	Before the Snow Flies
☐	Winter boots with deep tread
☐	Ice grips for outdoor walks
☐	Ice tip for the cane, if used
☐	Flashlight by the bed and the door
☐	Extra medications and diabetes supplies for storm days
☐	A few days of easy meals in the freezer
☐	Medication review booked with the doctor or pharmacist
☐	Foot care appointment booked

Important contacts

Contact	Name & phone
Family doctor	
Pharmacist	
Diabetes educator or nurse	
Foot care provider	
Snow clearing	
Family contact	
Ideal Caregivers 4u	1-866-372-0603

We're Here to Help

Keeping a loved one steady through the winter takes a team. Ideal Caregivers 4u has supported families at home since 1998, and we'd be glad to support yours.

Services we provide:

- Senior Home Safety Specialists
- Personal Health Care
- Clinical Nursing Services
- Awake Overnight Care
- Companionship Care
- Healthy Cooking & Meal Planning
- Hospital Discharge Program

We proudly serve families in Ottawa, Mississauga, Markham, Pickering-Ajax, Oshawa-Whitby, and Edmonton.

Call 1-866-372-0603

idealcaregivers4u.com/services