

HIP PROTECTORS IN LONG-TERM CARE FACILITIES

WHAT ARE HIP PROTECTORS?

- Hip protectors are garments or undergarments with pockets for protective pads that protect the hips in the case of a fall.
- The pads can either be “hard-shelled” or “soft-shelled.”
- In the event of a fall, the pad absorbs or disperses the force away from the hip.

KEY MESSAGES

1. Hip protectors should be considered as one element of effective institutional, regional, or provincial/territorial injury prevention strategies for seniors in long-term care facilities.
2. Hip protectors benefit some long-term care residents more than others. Specific criteria should be applied to determine which seniors would benefit most (e.g., residents with previous falls or fractures, osteoporosis, cognitive impairment; women over 70; and where hip protectors will not greatly interfere with activities of daily living).
3. Long-term care staff and clinicians need to work closely with long-term care residents and their families to determine which type of hip protector best suits the needs of the resident. The preference of the resident must be considered.
4. To allow for consistent use by residents in long-term care facilities, an adequate number of hip protectors need to be provided.



For more project information, visit the CADTH website:

www.cadth.ca/hipprotectors

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MORE INFORMATION

Fractures of the hip — A significant health risk for seniors:

- Each year, approximately 50% of all residents in long-term care facilities will fall at least once.
- About 1% of seniors who fall experience a hip fracture.
- 20% of those experiencing a hip fracture will die within one year, 7% die within 30 days.
- Following a hip fracture, seniors may experience fear, anxiety, reduced mobility, and the need for additional care and resources (e.g., mechanical lifts, wheelchairs).

Hip fractures may be reduced through:

- Prevention and treatment of osteoporosis
- Prevention of falling
- Use of hip protectors.

Hip Protectors — The evidence and the issues for residents of long-term care facilities:

- Hip protectors, although not all equally effective, are, in general, clinically and cost-effective in preventing hip fractures in women over 70 living in a long-term care facility. Hip protectors could reduce their risk of hip fractures by 23% at typical levels of compliance.
- Compliance (the percentage of time the hip protector is worn or worn correctly) is an important issue and research has shown it to range from 24% to 92%, with a median of about 56%.
- Reasons for not using hip protectors as intended may include discomfort, appearance, cost, skin irritations, dressing and toileting difficulties, and inadequate instruction and education on use.
- By involving, teaching, and motivating long-term care staff, long-term care residents, and their families, compliance with hip protectors can be improved.

OTHER RESOURCES AND PROJECT INFORMATION

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