Hip Protectors: A Summary

Based on the CSA, or Canadian Standards Association, Express Document (EXP) 08 Hip Protectors, first edition, 2017, which overviews the labelling and testing of hip protectors

What are hip protectors?

Wearable hip protectors help reduce the force during a fall. They have two parts:

- an impact protector, which reduces the force on the hip during a fall.
- a system that holds the protector in place, such as a garment.

There is a wide range of hip protectors on the market. Some hip protectors are designed to withstand one impact and then be replaced. Other hip protectors are designed to withstand several impacts.

Hip protectors do not reduce the risk of falling, but they do help reduce the risk of a hip fracture during a fall. Hip protectors can be worn by anyone at risk for a hip fracture to enhance safe mobility. More information on preventing falls is available on the Public Health Agency of Canada website: phac-aspc.gc.ca/seniors-aines/ips-pba-eng.php.

Why are hip protectors important?¹, ²

- One in three adults over the age of 65, living at home, and almost two in three adults in long-term care fall at least once per year. Osteoporosis Canada recommends the use of hip protectors for all residents of long-term care.
- In Canada, there are more than 28,000 hip fractures every year.
- One in four individuals die within one year of a hip fracture and the related medical treatment costs are in excess of $1 billion.

See CADTH’s work on hip protectors at cadth.ca/hip-protectors including a guidance card: Hip Protectors in Long-Term Care Facilities.

What information is to be supplied by the manufacturer?

Labelling should include the following product information and instructions:

- how to position the protector correctly over the hip
- the body size (e.g., waist) or weight for a given product size (e.g., S, M, L, XL)
- cleaning and disinfecting instructions, and the number of times the garment may be cleaned and disinfected (to a maximum of 30 times, unless stated otherwise)
- whether the hip protector is for a single individual or can be used by additional individuals after cleaning and disinfecting
- warnings of any known issues with other medical devices, inappropriate uses, and a warning that not all hip fractures can be prevented, even when the hip protector is worn correctly
- whether the hip protector is to be replaced by a new device after a single impact; for reusable products, information should be included on the number of reuses and how to check for damage to the device after the hip protector has sustained an impact
- how much the hip protector reduces the force during a fall (known as the protective value); the number (between 0 and 100) indicates how much the hip protector reduces the force during a fall — the larger the number, the greater the protection.

Other important information to know about hip protectors:

- Hip protectors should be comfortable, and easy to put on and take off.
- Well-fitting and well-designed garments, or skin-friendly tape to keep the hip protector in position, is very important for the hip protector to function properly. Hip protectors should stay in place during walking, sitting, bending, and during a fall.
- Hip protectors should not prevent independent dressing, toileting, or the use of incontinence products.

For more information

This information is based on the CSA, or Canadian Standards Association, Express Document (EXP08) Hip Protectors, first edition, 2017. It provides information about the selection, use, and care of a hip protector. All hip protectors can be tested for biomechanical performance prior to wearing, in accordance with Annex A of the Express Document.

The Express Document has been prepared by the Development Committee on Hip Protectors. An Express Document is established to provide quick solutions in response to an identified market need based on a common understanding and as an alternate solution to standardization.
References


Resources

CADTH Knowledge Mobilization Tools: cadth.ca/hip-protectors
CSA EXP08-17 Express Document: shop.csa.ca
CADTH: cadth.ca
CSA Group: csagroup.org

This material is made available for informational purposes only and no representations or warranties are made with respect to its fitness for any particular purpose; this document should not be used as a substitute for professional medical advice or for the application of professional judgment in any decision-making process. Users may use this document at their own risk. The Canadian Agency for Drugs and Technologies in Health (CADTH) does not guarantee the accuracy, completeness, or currency of the contents of this document. CADTH is not responsible for any errors or omissions, or injury, loss, or damage arising from or relating to the use of this document and is not responsible for any third-party materials contained or referred to herein. This document is subject to copyright and other intellectual property rights and may only be used for non-commercial, personal use or private research and study.

CADTH is an independent, not-for-profit organization responsible for providing Canada’s health care decision-makers with objective evidence to help make informed decisions about the optimal use of drugs and medical devices in our health care system.

CADTH receives funding from Canada’s federal, provincial, and territorial governments, with the exception of Quebec.

Ce document est également disponible en français.

cadth.ca