

## Preventing Falls

### About falls

Falls and injuries caused by falling are a common and serious problem for older people. A fall can cause pain and injury, reduce confidence and lead to a loss of independence because of a fear of falling again.

Around one in three adults over 65 who live at home will have at least one fall a year, and about half of these will have more frequent falls.

Some older people may be reluctant to seek advice about preventing a fall and think it's just 'part of getting older'. If you've had a fall or are concerned about falling, your GP, nurse or therapist will take any concerns you have seriously because of the impact a fall can have on your health.

**Many falls are preventable and ageing does not have to mean loss of independence.**

### Reasons why people may fall

- difficulties walking or balancing
- poor vision
- a long-term health condition, such as heart disease, dementia or low blood pressure
- hazards in the home, street or buildings
- poor footwear

### Avoiding having a fall

Tips for preventing a fall include:

- ask your GP to review your medication
- ask your GP or pharmacist about the side effects of your medication
- have your eyesight checked at least every two years and every year if you're over 70
- at home keep your floors clear of clutter, trailing wires, wrinkled carpets or anything else you might trip
- use non-slip mats and rugs
- ensure your home is well lit, especially on the stairs and landings

- turn on a light when getting out of bed at night
- ensure your shoes and slippers fit well and take care of your feet. Identify any concerns to your GP or podiatrist
- avoid walking on slippery floors in socks or tights
- keep warm - cold muscles don't work as well and may lead to accidents and injuries
- wear a pendant alarm and consider purchasing one if you haven't got one
- increase your intake of calcium and vitamin D (from dairy produce, tinned fish and sunlight)
- if possible, keep items within easy reach to avoid climbing, bending and stretching
- keep active
- put handrails on stairs, doorways, corridors and in your bathroom

**If you do have a fall or nearly fall do not ignore it - Let your GP know.**