

Preventing Falls

A guide for Older People

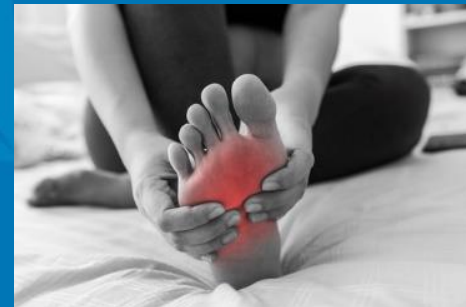
- In a typical week in Northern Ireland two people die as a result of a home accident.
- **There are 17,000 admissions to hospital each year as a result of an accident.**
- **FALLS** are the most common accident type among the over 65s as the risk of a fall increases with age.

What factors can increase the risk of having a fall?

- Balance or mobility problems
- Taking four or more medications per day
- Eyesight problems

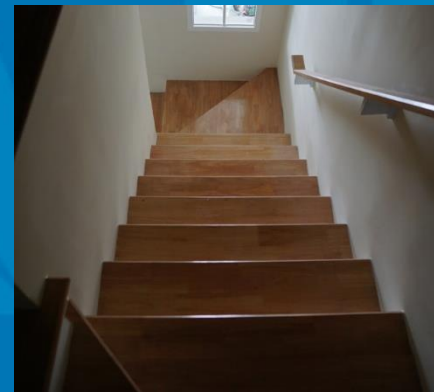


- **Postural hypotension (feeling dizzy and light-headed when getting up from a chair/bed)**
- **Feet problems**
- **Alcohol**



Look out for these risk factors around the home...

- **Poor lighting - particularly on stairs**
- **Loose carpets or rugs**



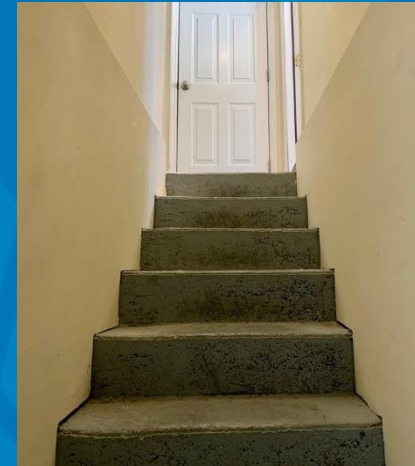
- **Slippery floors**



- **Badly fitting footwear or clothing**



- **Lack of safety equipment, such as grab rails**



- **Clutter and trip hazards**



Maintaining a Safer Home Environment

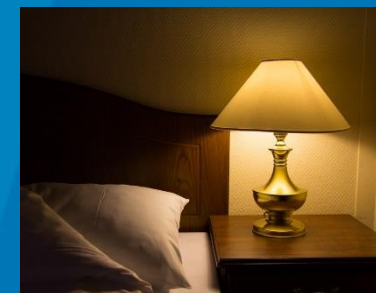
- Remove frayed/worn carpet and rugs.
- **Make sure floors and stairs are clear of clutter and trip hazards such as trailing electrical cables.**
- Ensure hallways, stairways and kitchen are brightly lit.
- **Use long-life bulbs so you do not have to change them so often.**



- **Use non-slip mats.**
- Keep items within easy reach (avoid using high up cupboards).
- **Contact Community Occupational Therapy for an assessment if you are having difficulty (e.g. climbing stairs, steps or getting in/out of the bath/shower).**

Everyday routines make a difference

- Sit down when washing and dressing.
- Take your time rising from bed and chairs.
- Do not rush to answer the door or telephone.
- Get a telephone which can be carried from room to room with you.
- Always put on a light when getting out of bed at night.



What to wear

- **Do not wear clothes which are too long and could trip you up.**
- **Keep feet warm with socks or leg warmers. Make sure these are not too tight.**
- **Wear well-fitting shoes which have a broad heel and arch support.**
- **Visit a Podiatrist or Chiropodist if you have foot discomfort.**

Look after your body

- **Have your eyes tested every two years, or every year if you are over 70, or have diabetes or glaucoma.**
- **Visit an optometrist if you notice changes in your vision.**





- **Make sure you take your medication as directed. A pill organiser is a useful way to keep track yourself. Some Pharmacy's provide a pre-filled organiser service.**
- **If you are experiencing side effects from taking medicine request a medication review from your Doctor or Pharmacist.**

- **Regular exercise such as walking or gardening will help balance and strength.**
- Gentle stretching can help joints.
- **NI Direct has a Stay Steady video with some great tips: nidirect.gov.uk/articles/keeping-mobile-and-preventing-falls**
- Free Strength & Balance exercise booklets are available from the Council

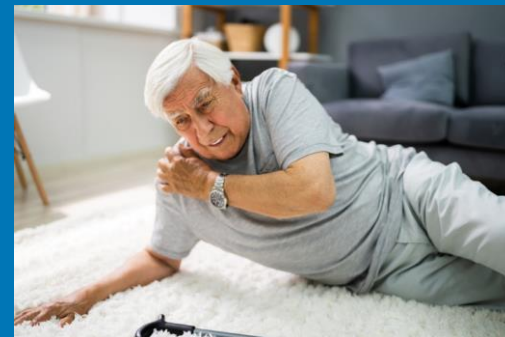


Our diet can help to prevent a fall

- **Help prevent osteoporosis by eating a diet rich in Calcium. Calcium rich foods include dairy products, oily fish, dark leafy vegetables and beans.**
- **Make sure you get enough Vitamin D as the body needs this to absorb calcium.**
- **The most important source of Vitamin D is the sun, but you should still always wear sunscreen. Talk to your Pharmacist or Doctor about a Vitamin D supplements.**



What to do if you have a fall



- **Don't panic - you will probably feel a little shocked and shaken but try and stay calm.**
- **If unhurt look for something to hold onto and something soft to put under the knee.**
- **Hold onto a firm object for support and put the soft object under the knees; place one foot flat on the floor with the knee bent in front of the body.**

- Lean forward putting weight on hands and foot until it is possible to place other foot beside the one on the floor.
- **Sit down and rest for a short time.**

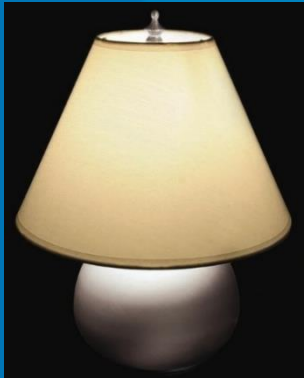
What to do if hurt

- Get help by making a noise like banging or shouting, using your personal alarm or dialling 999.
- **Try to get comfortable until help arrives.**
- Keep warm, starting with feet and legs.
- **It is uncomfortable to keep still for any length of time and this may lead to pressure problems.**
- Moving position every half hour and moving feet helps the circulation and improves comfort.

Can the Council can help?

We provide home safety checks for Over 65s and vulnerable adults where we can give tailored information and advice about home safety. In addition, useful home safety items/gadgets can be provide free of charge.

Some of the free Equipment we can provide...



- Touch Lamp
- Jar Opener
- Long handled Shoe Horn
- Helping Hand
- Sock Aid
- CO Alarm



We can also make onward referrals to other services within the Council and other relevant organisations that may help too...

NI Fire & Rescue Service Home Fire Safety Check

Radius Floating Support



Community Advice

Occupational Therapy



Energy Efficiency Advisor

Assisted Bin Lift



Good Morning Schemes

4 Tier Security Scheme

and others...



**To self refer or to refer on someone's
behalf please contact us on:**

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