



Falls

What are Falls?

Falling, or worrying about falling, can be a great concern and anxiety for those who are getting older or have illnesses or disabilities that may make them more vulnerable to falls. Preventing falls among adults is a crucial aspect of safeguarding their well-being, particularly as they age. One of the primary strategies is to conduct a comprehensive assessment of their living environment. Identifying and rectifying potential hazards within the home, such as loose carpets, cluttered walkways, or inadequate lighting, significantly reduces the risk of falls.

Top tips to prevent falls:

- **Mobility and Balance - Walking aids:** Provide and encourage the consistent use of assistive devices like walking sticks or zimmer frames to enhance stability and mobility, making sure they are identifiable and accessible. Refer to physiotherapist if there are concerns with mobility.
- **Regular Exercise Programs:** Encourage participation in tailored weight bearing exercise routines that focus on improving strength, balance, and flexibility, as well as walking and dancing, as these can significantly reduce the risk of falls.
- **Confusion and cognitive impairment - Dementia** can affect the signals the brain receives therefore people with Dementia can be particularly at risk of falls. Contrasting colours on rails, in bedrooms, stairs, bathroom doors/baths can help as well as visual cues/pictures on doors and personalising resident walking aids.
- **History of falls –** Use of walking aids, sensor equipment, low profiling beds may be appropriate, consider assessments from physio and Occupational therapist and falls service. (I don't think there is a Falls service anymore)
- **Medical conditions - Regular Health Reviews:** Ensure regular health check-ups to identify and address any underlying health issues that may impact balance and coordination.
- **Medication Management -** Ensure proper management of medications, including regular reviews of side effects and interactions that might contribute to dizziness or instability. Consider blood pressure. Think polypharmacy!
- **Continence -** Ensure toileting facilities are accessible, their positioning in terms of distance and have suitable equipment. Appropriate clothing to ease independence.
- **Hydration and Nutrition -** Promote a healthy diet and sufficient hydration, as nutritional deficiencies and dehydration can significantly contribute to weakness, constipation, lack of energy, low blood pressure and therefore an increased risk of falls.
- **Sensory - Vision and hearing check-ups:** Regular eye and hearing examinations are essential for detecting and correcting vision or hearing problems that could increase the risk of falls.
- **Environment - Home Safety Assessment:** Conduct a thorough assessment of the individual's living environment to identify and address potential fall hazards such as, loose rugs, uneven flooring, cables, clutter, or poor lighting.
- **Footwear and footcare -** Emphasize the importance of appropriate footwear to prevent slips and trips. Monitor feet regularly to ensure no sore areas/rubbing, bunions, corns or long toenails.
- **Fall Prevention Education:** Offer educational sessions to individuals and their caregivers about the importance of fall prevention and how to create a safe living environment.
- **Emergency Response Plan:** Establish an emergency response plan in case of a fall, including having emergency contact information readily available and ensuring the individual knows how to call for help if needed. This should also include post falls monitoring and escalation plan when needed, if in care home. Other services available to support now such as UCR and Falls Responder Service.

More Information:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/falls/prevention/>

<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/health-wellbeing/exercise/falls-prevention/>