Occupational Therapy

Falls Prevention

World Health Organisation Definition of a Fall;

“An event which results in a person coming to rest inadvertently on the ground or floor or other lower level ground”.

**Effects of Falls**

**Psychological**

Loss of confidence

Loss of motivation

Isolation/ Loneliness

Depression/ Anxiety

Fear

 **Quality of**

**Physical Life**

Fractures

Pain

Injury

Infection

Hypothermia

Loss of independence

Death

**Functional**

Loss of independence/ increased dependence

Impact on social care, increased costs

Reduced mobility/ activity

Reduced quality of life

Falls Prevention

8 Tips to Stay Steady

1. Exercise (Tailored exercise programmes can reduce falls by 54%)
2. Check your eyes and hearing
3. Look after your feet
4. Ask about medicines- (NOTE- It is important to not stop taking your medication without consulting your doctor).

DO

* Follow the instructions when taking your medicines.
* Attend your reviews.
* Be aware of feelings of dizziness or drowsiness and speak to your doctor.
* Know your medicines- read your patient information leaflets.
1. Get enough vitamin D
* Foods sources of vitamin D include; Margarine, Eggs, Liver, Oily Fish (pilchards, mackeral, salmon and sardines), Breakfast cereals.
1. Eat a rich diet in calcium
* Milk and Dairy foods are richest sources of calcium which include; Milk, Cheese, Yogurts.
* Others sources include; Fish with soft bones (sardines, salmon, and pilchards) Dried Fruit (apricots, prunes, raisins and dates) Dark leafy vegetables, Kidney beans and lentils, white bread and nuts.
1. Check the home for hazards
2. Visit your GP/ local falls service

POSTURAL HYPOTENSION/ DIZZINESS THIS CAN BE LINKED IN WITH LYING

Postural hypertension is a drop in blood pressure during a change in position. This reduces the amount of blood going to your brain and can cause symptoms of dizziness, falls and balckouts.

The fall in blood pressure can occur at any time and may happen after getting up from either lying or sitting positions.

The following measures will help to prevent this;

* See your GP to ensure no underlying medical reason for symptoms.
* Symptoms will likely be worse in the morning when blood pressure is lowest. Take extra care, especially when getting up in the morning.
* Raise the head of the bed with pillows so your not sleeping flat. This will change positioning until your ready to sit up.
* Get out of bed slowly. Exercise your arms and legs before sitting up and again before standing is often helpful.
* Remember sit back down again if you feel dizzy if possible lie flat.
* Do not rush off when you have stood up. Stand for a short period of time. It may be benefical to walk on the spot before moving away from your bed or chair.
* Try not to stand or sit in one position for too long.
* Some people have bigger drops in blood pressure after large meals. Try to eat little and often.
* Try not to stand in one position for too long especially when it is hot.
* If you have to stand for long periods then try bouncing up and down on your heels to encourage blood flow.
* Ensure you drink plenty of fluids, up to 2 litres is recommended.
* Your doctor may advise you to increase your salt intake.
* You may be prescribed high leg support tights.
* Your doctor may alter your existing medications. It is important to have this reviewed.

**Dos and Don’t to Avoid Falls**

**Reduce The Risk of Falling**

**Bathroom**

**DO**

* Try and have someone in the house whilst you are bathing.
* Use a non- slip mat
* Make sure you have everything you need to hand, shampoo, towels, before you enter the bath.
* Have a stool or chair at the ready in case you feel dizzy.
* Find out which bathroom equipment is suitable for you, such as grab rails, shower board to increase your safety whilst bathing.

**DON’T....LOCK THE BATHROOM DOOR.......HAVE THE WATER TOO HOT!!**

Bedroom

DO

* Make sure your bed is the correct height for you
* Have a light by the bed, so that it can be switched off from your bed.
* Try and have a telephone extension or your home alarm call pendent by your bed.
* Remove clutter from around your environment and have a clear walkway.
* Ensure all electrical cables/ wires are tucked away so you don’t trip over them.
* Ensure walking aids are in clear reach and that you have correct equipment in place.

Callers

DO

* Warn any callers that it may take a little longer to answer the door.

DON’T

* Be tempted to rush to the door or telephone putting yourself at risk in the process.

Clothing

DO

* Wear clothing that allows your legs and feet to move freely.
* Ensure shoes/ slippers fit correctly.

DON’T

* Wear clothing that is too long or too tight.

**HALL & STAIRWAY**

DO

* Make sure you have a two-way light switches and bulbs fitted on the stairs, ensuring adequate lighting.
* Make sure you have one, preferably two hand rails on the stairs.
* Fit a letter cage for you post to prevent you from bending down.
* Remove loose rugs and mats.

**HEATING**

DO

* Have your controls pre- set, fire controls can be remote controlled or located to top of your fire to prevent the need for bending- contact your gas advisor.

**KITCHEN**

DO

* Make sure you are near a work surface in the event you need to put hot or heavy items down quickly.
* Make sure you have a stool or chair in the kitchen on case you need to sit to rest and conserve energy.
* Wipe up spills on the floor- slippery floors can cause a fall.
* Keep everyday items within easy reach.

DON’T

* Reach up to high cupboards
* Store everyday items too high or too low.

**LIGHTING**

DO

* Keep rooms and stairways well lit
* Use a 100 watt light or long life equivalent to make it easier to see
* Use long life bulbs- you can leave them on longer and they work out cheaper
* Remember, long life bulbs may take a minute or so before they give full light.

**WALKING AIDS**

DO

* Make sure you use walking aids that are provided for you.
* Check the rubber at the base of your walking aid and change when worn down.

DON’T

* Carry objects when using a walking frame.