

Staying Steady

*Advice and information
on how to prevent slips,
trips and falls*

y o u r h e a l t h o u r p r i o r i t y



What you can do

General health and well being can make a big difference to your quality of life, whatever your age. Eating well, keeping fit, looking after your bones and your feet are all important. They can help you stay mobile and independent.

Strength and balance

Don't give up on exercise just because you have had a fall or are afraid of falling. Reducing your physical activity can actually make you more prone to falling.

Regular physical activity such as walking, gardening, housework, dancing, keep-fit classes or chair-based exercises will improve your strength and balance.

Remember, if you are new to physical activity, speak to your GP first and take it gently at first and build up slowly. Always start with a warm-up and finish by cooling down.

For more information on exercising call the Health & Wellbeing Development Worker Team on 01977 705473 or visit the Age UK website at www.ageuk.org.uk.

Bone health

Ensure that you keep your bones strong by eating a balanced diet and drinking 6-8 glasses of fluid a day.

All drinks count, but water, milk and fruit juices are the healthiest.

Here are some suggestions as to how you can help maintain your bone health:

- Safe sunshine on the skin for 15 – 20 minutes, three to four times per week
- Balanced and varied food choices including two to three portions of milk and dairy foods a day
- Over 65s and people with low sun exposure should take a daily 10 microgram vitamin D supplement. Speak to your GP or pharmacist for more information.

More information is available on our Boost your Bones advice sheet or for more information call the Health & Wellbeing Development Worker Team on 01977 705473 or visit the Age UK website at www.ageuk.org.uk.

Medicines

- If you are taking regular medicines, it is important to get your medications reviewed every twelve months
- Always follow the instructions on your medicines
- If your medicines make you feel faint or dizzy make sure you let your GP or nurse know

- When you start new medicines it may take 1-2 weeks for your body to adjust, so take your time and be careful when standing up
- Medications that can increase your risks of falls include:
 - Ramipril
 - Furosemide
 - Oxybutynin
 - Zopiclone
 - Diazepam
 - Olanzapine
 - Temazepam.
 - Citalopram
 - Amitriptyline
 - Risperidone
 - Quetiapine

Eyesight

Your eyesight plays an important role in your sense of balance, so make sure you have your eyes checked regularly - at least every two years.

If you have diabetes or glaucoma you should have your eyes checked every year. You may be able to get help with the cost of glasses. Ask your optician for advice. Eye tests are available at home if necessary. Contact your local optician for more information.

Foot care

Looking after your feet and having your feet checked is very important. Foot problems can have a major impact on mobility, balance and stability. If you are in any doubt see your GP for advice.

Avoid wearing loose-fitting or open-backed footwear. Wear flat shoes with a fastening and a broad heel. Make sure they are comfortable and grip i.e. not slip-ons and not leather soles. Try to avoid walking in socks or tights on slippery floors.

If you have foot problems / discomfort that affects your walking and balance you may benefit from a specialist assessment. You will need a referral from a health professional such as your GP.

Keep safe at home

Small changes in your home can help prevent falls

- Try to avoid having loose rugs and mats
- Good lighting is very important, particularly on the stairs
- Keep the floor clear of trailing flexes, fraying carpet edges and clutter
- Be careful your pets do not get under your feet

- Consider getting a cordless phone or an answering machine, so that you don't have to rush to answer the phone
- Always mop up spills immediately.

More information is available in our 'Staying Steady in the Home' leaflet. To find out about a range of services available to help make changes around the home contact the Health & Wellbeing Development Worker Team on 01977 705473 or visit the Age UK website at www.ageuk.org.uk.

Telecare

Telecare offers extra support with fall sensors. To find out more about Telecare contact telecare@wakefield.gov.uk or Social Care Direct on 0845 8 503 503.

Care Link

Care Link services provides reassurance, peace of mind and a response to emergency situations 24 hours a day every day. If you are worried about falling when you are alone at home you could think about getting a community alarm with a pendant.

To find out more contact Care Link services on 01977 788000 or email carelink@wdh.co.uk

Please note that there may be a small charge associated with some of these recommendations. For more information please call the Health & Wellbeing Development Worker Team on 01977 705473.

Useful contacts

Health and Wellbeing Development Team	01977 705473
Age UK Wakefield District	01977 552114
Social Care Direct	0845 8 503 503
Care Link	01977 788000
Carers Wakefield District	01924 305544

Produced in partnership with:

The Mid Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust
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Age UK Wakefield District
Carers Wakefield District.

For queries about this leaflet, please contact:

Wakefield Public Health on 01924 303481

If you require this leaflet in another format such as large print, audio tape or other language, please contact the Patient Advice & Liaison Service (PALS) on: 0845 602 4832.

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