

# Are you at risk of falling?



By reading this leaflet and following the simple advice, you and your family or carer can reduce your risk of falling and injury.

## You may be at risk of falling if you:

- Get dizzy or light headed when you stand or turn.
- Have difficulty walking or rising from a low chair or bed.
- Have poor balance.
- Have fallen before.
- Take four or more medicines.
- Have a fear of falling.
- Suffer from depression or memory problems.
- Have poor eye sight or hearing.
- Are in a cluttered or poorly lit environment.
- Have foot problems causing pain and discomfort.
- Have uncomfortable or poorly fitting footwear.

## Helpful tips to prevent you falling:

### Be active

- Physical activities i.e. walking, gardening, swimming and Tai Chi, can help to improve mobility, strength, balance, flexibility and improve mood and mental health.
- Chair based activities can be done at home and are just as important as more strenuous physical exercise. You can ask to be seen by a physiotherapist at St Elizabeth Hospice if you are not sure what you should do, or how to get started.
- Pace and plan your activities to avoid fatigue and decrease the risk of you tripping.
- Active Suffolk can help you find local exercise classes:  
[www.activesuffolk.org/activities](http://www.activesuffolk.org/activities)

### Eat well and drink plenty of fluids

- Dizziness and weakness can be reduced by eating regular meals and keeping well hydrated.
- Eat foods rich in vitamin D and calcium to keep bones healthy. For example, dairy produce, eggs and green leafy vegetables. You could benefit from prescribed calcium and vitamin D - be sure to talk to your GP before starting any supplements.

## Check your sight and hearing - poor eyesight and hearing can affect your balance.

- Have your eyes tested yearly - it's free if you are over 60 years old.
- Be sure you wear the correct glasses, and take care when using bifocals and varifocals, especially on stairs and steps.
- If you have hearing problems see your nurse or GP for advice.

## Understand your medicines - some medicines can cause side effects that can increase falls risk e.g dizziness, drowsiness and weakness.

- Ask your doctor or pharmacist about possible side effects and feel free to raise any questions. If you are taking more than four medicines it is advisable to have this reviewed regularly, speak with your GP about this.
- When buying medicine over the counter, always inform the pharmacist of all prescribed and over the counter medicines you are taking.

## Make your home safe - check for hazards around your home.

- Remove any clutter blocking walkways.
- Secure loose wires and rugs.
- Ensure carpets firmly secured.
- Clean up spillages immediately.
- Take care if pets running around.
- Ensure well lit hallways and stairs, consider night light beside bed.
- Take your time when rising from chair or bed.
- Take care on the stairs, consider hand rails if needed.
- Avoid standing on chairs or stools.

## Wear sensible shoes and keep feet healthy

- Wear well fitting, low heeled shoes.
- Footwear should have a secure back and not be slip on.
- Avoid wearing footwear which is worn out or loose.
- Have regular foot care.

## Avoid or limit alcohol intake

- Either alone or combined with medicines, alcohol increases the risk of falls.

## Low mood and depression

- These can increase your risk of falls - discuss with your GP.

**Talk to your GP if you feel at risk - many falls can be prevented.**

**Have you had one or more falls during the past year?**

If yes, it is important to find out why.

Talking to your GP and making small changes where possible will enable you to reduce your risk of further falls and injury.

## We can help

St Elizabeth Hospice have a range of therapy services for advice on things to do to minimise the risk of falls.

Our therapists can help with:

- Personalised exercise programmes.
- Walking aid assessment and provision.
- Assessment on home situation and advice of any aids or adaptations that may reduce falls risk.
- Advice on what to do should someone have a fall, including where appropriate teaching safe techniques to get up from the floor, or assessing for specialist equipment for frequent fallers.

## Contact us

01473 727776

[enquiries@stelizabethhospice.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@stelizabethhospice.org.uk)

[stelizabethhospice.org.uk](http://stelizabethhospice.org.uk)

St Elizabeth Hospice

565 Foxhall Road, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP3 8LX

If you have any feedback on this leaflet, please contact:

[Linda@stelizabethhospice.org.uk](mailto:Linda@stelizabethhospice.org.uk)

## Other support services

East Suffolk Osteoporosis Support Group - 01473 625246

Royal Osteoporosis Society - 0808 800 0035

Age UK - 0800 055 6112

Suffolk Family Carers: support and advocacy services -  
01473 835477

Social Services: Customer first - 0808 800 4005

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