

Other Services and Actions that can Help

It is important to encourage anyone who has fallen to report the fall to a health professional and seek help. Falls are a major health issue for older people and cause serious injuries and deaths every year. Without intervention individuals who fall once are much more likely to fall again. When a person's falls risk is reduced their confidence is normally improved. With increased confidence a person will be more active and less likely to become housebound or socially isolated.

GP Out-of-Hours Services

If you fall and your family doctor is not available remember there is the GP Out-of-Hours service. This service is for anyone who needs urgent primary medical care. The service operates from 6pm each weekday evening and 24 hours on Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays. To receive help you must telephone first on **Tel: 028 3839 9201**, for Text relay put **18001** before this number. Please note that the GP Out-of-Hours service does not insert or remove stitches, and cannot do blood tests or xrays. **If the condition is potentially immediately life-threatening (eg. suspected heart attack or stroke) telephone 999 directly.**
<http://www.gpoutofhours.hscni.net/>

Southern Trust Fracture Service

The Southern Trust Fracture Liaison Service is available to women and men aged over 50 who have had a **new** fracture as a result of low trauma. The service identifies these patients and either contacts them to arrange a bone density scan and fracture risk assessment or can recommend treatment for some patients without the need for a scan. Individual advice is also given on modification of risk factors and arrangement made for follow up if necessary.

Look into Your Bone Health

If you have broken a bone easily, it may be a sign that your bones are fragile and that you may be at increased risk of breaking more bones. Not all broken bones are an indication of bone fragility - those of concern occur after a mild trauma such as a fall from a standing height or less. The most common fractures related to osteoporosis are hip, wrist and spine fractures however, any bone that breaks easily in men and women over the age of 50 is likely to be related in some way to bone fragility. If you have broken a bone easily or are concerned about your bone health, speak with your doctor about a bone check or a fracture risk assessment to find out if you are at risk of further fractures.

A new campaign 'Stop at One' from the National Osteoporosis Society provides useful information including a factsheet giving tips on how to speak to your doctor about your bone health and an online quiz to determine if you may be at risk.

FALLS

For further information on this campaign visit: <http://stopatone.nos.org.uk/>.

For general advice or a specific query on bone health and osteoporosis visit: www.nos.org.uk or call the NOS helpline service which is operated by Nurses with specialist knowledge of osteoporosis and bone health: **Tel: 0845 450 0230** or **01761 472721**.

Strength and Balance Exercise

Strength and balance exercise has been proven to play a large role in improving balance and decreasing the risk of falling. This type of exercise can be found in our trust publication *Strength and Balance Exercises*, for someone who would benefit from increased activity at home. Strength and Balance exercise classes are available in local leisure centres across the Trust and anyone can be referred into these. We would recommend that if someone has already fallen they should be assessed by the Falls team staff before commencing. For further information contact The Southern Trust Falls Co-ordinator on **Tel: 028 3741 2326**.

Check Your Home Environment is Safe from Hazards

Use the checklist in this booklet to identify common falls hazards and make changes to your home; by reducing the hazards your falls risk will also be lessened.

Southern Safer Homes

If you would like professional advice on the safety of your home consider contacting a Home Safety Officer through the Southern Safer Homes project. This service is provided to reduce the risk of a home accident; people aged 65 and over, children under 5 years; vulnerable adults and children, those with a disability or other special needs.

Home Safety Officers work across the council areas of Armagh, Banbridge, Craigavon, Dungannon & Newry. Through either a self-referral or a referral from another agency, an Officer will visit a home to carry out a free home safety assessment, offering information and advice regarding avoidance of accidents, also identifying any hazardous features within the home likely to cause accidents. In certain circumstances, free safety equipment may be provided eg. bedside lamp (if getting up at night), gang socket (to avoid overloading of adaptor and potential fire risk), shoe horn, bottle/can opener, carbon monoxide alarm, etc.