

Tips for talking
to your
GP about...

falls



This leaflet provides information on why you should speak to your doctor about falls. It also gives tips on how to make the most of your appointment.

**Supporting strength, confidence & independence
as you get older.**

Developed by the Promoting Wellbeing Division

www.southerntrust.hscni.net/falls



Southern Health
and Social Care Trust

Quality Care - for you, with you

The risk of serious falls increases with age but many falls can be prevented if you seek help as early as possible. Take steps to reduce your risk of falls. Seek help from your doctor and other staff and services designed to help you. Little changes can make a big difference and help you maintain your confidence and independence for longer.



Tell your doctor if you have fallen, especially if you are falling often.



Makes notes or have a list of questions to discuss with the doctor. Focus on the risk factors relevant to you.

Read Age UK's 'Staying Steady' booklet
www.ageuk.org.uk/globalassets/age-uk/documents/information-guides/ageukig14_staying_steady_inf.pdf



Ask your doctor to review your medicines for any possible side-effects that could cause falls. ***Never stop taking your medicines without speaking to your doctor first.***



Ask if you would benefit from medicine to make your bones stronger.



If you find it difficult to manage your medicines e.g. remembering to take them, difficulty reading instructions, opening packing - then speak to your doctor or pharmacist.



Falls can be caused by many things. Speak to your doctor about your:

- Ability to manage everyday activities
- Blood Pressure
- Continence
- Drinking
- Eating
- Medical History
- Mobility
- Sleeping



Your doctor can help you access other health professionals and services that can help you live at home for longer and reduce your risk of falls e.g. physiotherapist, occupational therapist, social worker.



Consider taking a family member or trusted friend with you - this could be helpful.



Give yourself enough time to address your concerns about falling, don't try to squeeze other matters into this appointment.



If you don't understand something the doctor has said or didn't hear what they said - ask them to explain the information to you in another way or repeat what they said or write the information down for you to take with you. Otherwise your appointment may be in vain.

Other steps you can take to reduce your risk of falling:

- Check the safety of your home environment for any hazards. Your local Home Safety Officer can do free visits and give you advice, information and more. Get in touch with your local Council (Environmental Health Dept) about this.
- Have a regular hearing and vision test.
- Take part in regular physical activity especially activities that strengthen your legs and improve your balance.
- Take care of your feet and wear appropriate footwear. Seek help for any foot problems or see a podiatrist.
- Try to eat a balanced diet and one that is rich in calcium and vitamin D. The best source is sunshine but foods and supplements can also provide you with this essential nutrient.

For further information and advice

Southern Trust Falls Coordinator:

Tel: 028 3756 4909

Southern Trust Access and Information Service (older people):

Tel: 028 3756 4300

Southern Trust Website:

<https://bit.ly/2ZXcWbq>

AgeUK

www.ageuk.org.uk/

Tel: 0808 808 7575 (*advice, information, publications*).



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