



milton keynes council

Central and North West London   
NHS Foundation Trust

# Staying Steady Milton Keynes

## How to reduce the risk of falling



*Wellbeing for life*

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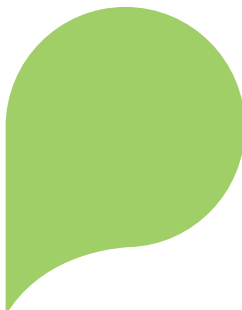
This booklet contains information about what you can do to minimise the risk of falling and advice on what to do following a fall. You can discuss any aspect of this leaflet with a member of the Staying Steady team (contact details on [page 11](#)).

**If you have a fall, mention it to your GP or other health professional at your next appointment.**



## Safety around the home

- Make sure your home is well lit and free of clutter
- Never leave items on the stairs
- Make sure your home is free from trip hazards such as rugs, frayed carpets or trailing wires
- Fit handrails and/or grab rails where needed on stairs, steps and in the bathroom
- Keep items that you use within easy reach to avoid bending and climbing
- Do not rush to answer the door or telephone
- Turn on a light when getting out of bed at night
- Use a non-slip mat in the bath
- Arrange furniture so that it will not fall over; remove castors from chairs to make them more stable
- Use walking aids that are provided
- If you have a community alarm, wear it and check it monthly
- Take care with clothes that trail such as dressing gowns and trousers
- Try to ensure that your steps, stairs, footpaths and driveways are kept clear of clutter and rubbish. Wet leaves on a footpath can make the surface very slippery
- Leave space to move safely round furniture



# Stay healthy

## Exercise

- Take regular exercise, even if this is only a short walk, to keep muscles strong and joints supple
- Do any exercises that you have been given to improve your strength and balance. Do not exercise if you are ill or just after eating. Increase exercise gradually
- Speak with your doctor or a health professional if you experience pain you have not had before

## Footcare and footwear

- Ensure your shoes and slippers fit well - footwear that protects and supports your foot with non-slip soles is recommended
- Fastenings such as velcro will help to secure your feet and make footwear more secure when walking
- It is advisable to wear shoes or slippers indoors as they provide better grip with the floor and protect the foot from injury
- Have your toenails cut regularly
- Check your feet for injury and swelling; if you have painful feet seek professional advice



## Medication

- Some medicines can increase your falls risk, but it is important that you do not stop taking your medication without first talking to your doctor
- Ask your GP or pharmacist to review your medications and ask about the side effects and the best way to take the medication
- Follow the instructions for each medication you take
- Take tablets with a glass of water

## Light headedness

- Sometimes blood pressure can drop when you change position. This can happen if you move too quickly particularly when getting out of bed in the morning
- Take extra care when getting out of bed or if you have been sitting for a long period; move your arms and legs before sitting up and again before standing
- When you stand up, count slowly to three before moving away from furniture to make sure that you do not feel dizzy; walking on the spot before moving away from furniture can be beneficial
- Sit down if you feel lightheaded or dizzy



## Food and fluid

- Increase your daily intake of calcium and vitamin D (dairy produce, tinned boned fish and sunlight)
- Regular healthy meals help keep up strength and vitality
- Try to include five portions of fruit and vegetables every day (these contain important vitamins and minerals, fibre and anti-oxidants); starchy foods (such as bread or rice) for energy; milk and dairy foods provide calcium for bones; two portions of protein-rich food (such as meat, poultry, eggs or lentils) every day; not eating too many 'treat' foods such as cakes and biscuits
- Drink plenty of fluid to ensure the functioning of all the body's organs, 1.5-2 litres a day unless otherwise advised (variety of hot and cold drinks). Not drinking enough fluids may result in low blood pressure and increase the risk of falls
- Tea and coffee can be decaffeinated (caffeine irritates the bladder and prevents absorption of vitamins and minerals)
- Other ways to meet the target are to eat fruit such as melon, grapes, apples, nectarines etc which are mainly water
- Foods such as soup, jelly, gravy, custard, ice cream, milky cereal and milky porridge also will help to increase fluid intake
- You may need to consider how much alcohol you drink each day/week. Alcohol can make you unsteady and alter how some medication works



## Clothing

- Clothing that is too long can be a trip hazard; take care with laces and belts that they are not trailing
- It can be safer to get dressed sitting down including when putting items over your head



## Walking aids

- Walking aids can help to improve your balance and make you feel more confident
- If you have been provided with an aid it is important to use it; don't be embarrassed if it helps you stay steady
- Check aids for signs of wear, for example, brakes and the rubber (ferrules) at the base of the walking aid
- It is advised that you do not use furniture to help you walk
- Ensure that your walking aid is the correct height. The height of the handgrips should be at the level of the wrist bone when your elbows are very slightly bent (at an angle of about 15°)



## Swollen ankles

- Swollen ankles and swollen feet are common and usually not cause for concern, particularly if you have been standing or walking a lot
- You need to discuss the swelling with your GP for a diagnosis and treatment which can assist
- You may be advised to raise your legs on a stool; if you do this, you need to ensure that you protect your heels so they do not become sore
- Exercises like the one below can help to pump fluid back up your legs:

**A.** Sit upright, hold on to the side of the chair and straighten your left leg with your foot off the floor.

**B.** With your leg straight and raised, point your toes away from you.

**C.** Point your toes back towards you.

Try two sets of ten exercises with each foot.

## Vision and glasses

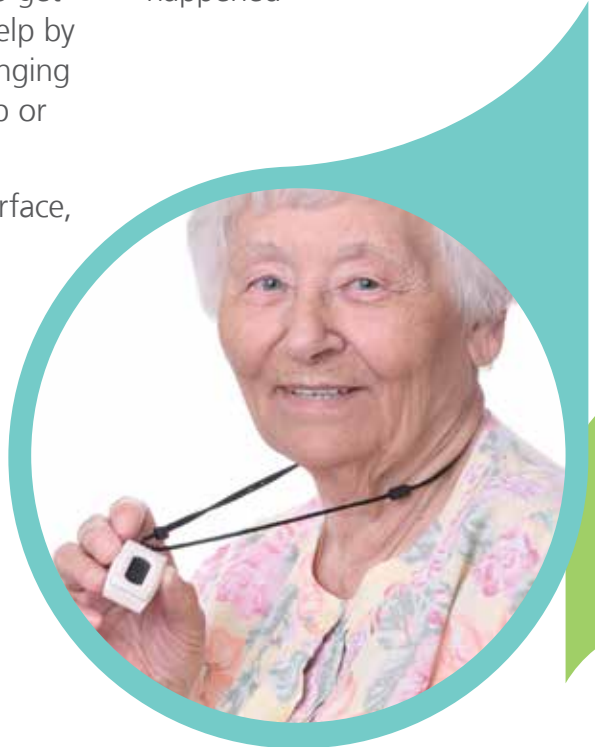
- Bifocal and varifocal glasses can make some people unsteady, especially on stairs or slopes as they can make it difficult to judge steps
- You may be better with separate glasses, one set for reading and another for ordinary activities
- You will need to remember not to walk when wearing your reading glasses
- Wearing sunglasses can help to reduce glare on sunny days
- Clean your glasses daily
- Have your eyes checked annually





# What to do if you fall

- Check the area for any items you may have dropped and broken as you do not want to move and cause further injury
- If you are not hurt you may want to try and get up from the floor. Think about how you are going to do this in stages, moving so you are near a stable piece of furniture eg, chair or settee first; then onto your hands and knees before getting up
- If you are hurt or unable to get up, you should summon help by using a pendant alarm, banging on the wall, calling for help or crawling to the telephone
- Roll or wriggle to a soft surface, such as carpet
- Keep warm by covering yourself with clothing, a table cloth or throw; keep moving and warm by regularly rolling or moving positions to avoid pressure sores, stiffness and to help circulation
- If you need to empty your bladder, use a newspaper or item of clothing to soak up the urine then roll away from the damp area
- Tell your GP about the fall so that he/she can find out why it happened



## Remember:

The information in this leaflet is intended for educational purposes providing general advice about reducing falls risk. Never ignore professional medical or healthcare advice or delay in seeking it because of something you have read in this leaflet.

You may want to make notes to discuss with a healthcare professional

## Contact us

Bletchley Community Hospital  
Campus, Whalley Drive  
Bletchley  
Milton Keynes  
MK3 6EN

For enquiries please telephone:  
01908 650405

Text relay: 18001 01908 650405

Opening hours

Monday – Friday

08:30 – 16:30

## Tell us, we're listening

We also collect feedback, complaints and compliments online. Tell us what you think at [www.cnwl.nhs.uk/feedback](http://www.cnwl.nhs.uk/feedback) and then we'll share and learn from your feedback.



This document is also available in other languages, large print, Braille, and audio format upon request. Please email [communications.cnwl@nhs.net](mailto:communications.cnwl@nhs.net)

We are now able to communicate with deaf or hard of hearing people via Text Relay. If you are making a call from a text phone dial **18001 01908 650405**

Dokument ten jest na życzenie udostępniany także w innych wersjach językowych, w dużym druku, w alfabecie Braille'a lub w formacie audio.

### **Polish**

நீங்கள் கேட்டுக்கொண்டால், இந்த ஆவணம் வேறு மொழிகளிலும், பெரிய எழுத்து அச்சிலும் அல்லது ஒலிநாடா வடிவிலும் அளிக்கப்படும்.

### **Tamil**

درخواست پر یہ دستاویز دیگر زبانوں میں، بڑے حروف کی چھپائی اور سننے والے ذرائع پر بھی میسر ہے۔

### **Urdu**

این مدرک همچنین بنا به درخواست به زبانهای دیگر، در چاپ درشت و در فرمت صوتی موجود است.

### **Farsi**

Šį dokumentą paprašius taip pat galima gauti kitomis kalbomis, dideliu šriftu, Brailio raštu ir garso juostoje. Prašome kreiptis el.

### **Lithuanian**

Mediante solicitação, este documento encontra-se também disponível noutras línguas, num formato de impressão maior, em Braille e em áudio.

### **Portuguese**

Este documento también está disponible y puede solicitarse en otros idiomas, letra grande, braille y formato de audio.

### **Spanish**

এই ডকুমেন্ট অন্য ভাষায়, বড় প্রিন্ট আকারে, ব্রেল এবং অডিও টেপ আকারেও অনুরোধ পাওয়া যায়

### **Bengali**

Dokumentigaan waxaa xitaa lagu heli karaa luqado kale, daabacad far waa-wayn, farta indhoolaha (Braille) iyo hab dhegaysi ah markii la soo codsado.

### **Somali**

Настоящий документ по отдельному запросу можно получить в переводе на другие языки, напечатанным крупным шрифтом или на аудиокассете.

### **Russian**