

TUMBLES

The 7 steps falls prevention checklist
patient information booklet



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Toilet



Urine



Medication and mobility



Beds, bells and blood pressure



Lighting



Eyesight and exercise



Slippers and shoes

TUMBLES

There are many things that may increase your chance of losing balance, feeling dizzy and falling over. In this booklet are some simple things for you to check that may stop you from falling. Follow the advice to reduce your risk of falling and to help keep you safe.

Many medications can increase your chances of falls, here is a list of some of the types of medicines that may affect you;

- Blood pressure tablets
- Heart medicines
- Diuretics or water tablets
- Muscle relaxers
- Laxatives
- Sleeping tablets
- Painkillers
- Antihistamines



Toilet

- **Do you require frequent visits to the toilet?** Ensure facilities are close by. Pre-empt regular visits to the bathroom, giving yourself plenty of time to get there.
- **Is the path to the toilet clear of hazards?** Be careful on uneven floor surfaces, make sure there are no flexes, cables, furniture to trip over.
- If you are a man who needs to use the toilet during the night, sit rather than stand, or steady yourself on a washbasin or handrail. Alternatively, have a bottle to use by the bedside.
- Tablets are sometimes prescribed to help control the urge to wee, if you take these do they help? If they are not making a difference, ask your doctor to stop them.

Urine



- **Urine (wee) infections** – a wee infection may make you feel dizzy or confused. If your wee is cloudy or smelly you may have an infection, contact your GP practice for advice.
- You may have been prescribed tablets to help your wee flow if you have ‘prostate’ problems. If these are making you feel dizzy or unsteady please speak to your doctor or nurse.
- If you don’t drink enough you may become dizzy, so make sure you drink plenty. Little and often throughout the day is better than just one or two cups every few hours. Keep drinks within easy reach.

Medication



- Many common medications may increase your risk of having a fall. Check to see if any medications you take are listed on page 3. Ask your pharmacist about the effects they can have and any precautions you should take.
- Taking more than four medicines can increase your risk of having a fall. Ensure that a health professional has reviewed your medications in the last six months to check they are still the most effective for you.
- Medicines to help you sleep should not be taken for long periods, ask your Doctor or nurse for help in stopping them.
- Alcohol may increase your risk of having a fall when mixed with some medication. Be aware of the increased effects alcohol may have.

Mobility

- If you use equipment such as a walking stick or a frame, check for wear and tear on ferrules (the rubber feet), hand grips and underarm pads to see if they need replacing. Make sure equipment is regularly maintained.
- It is important that the equipment is the most suitable and comfortable for your lifestyle and home environment. Contact your physiotherapist or equipment supplier if you think your needs have changed.



Beds and bells

- If your bed is too high or too low, or your mattress too soft it will be difficult for you to get in and out of and you may fall (The usual bed height is 18 inches). If you sit on the edge of your bed and your feet are flat on the floor and your knees are in line with your hips, then your bed height is correct for you.
- Don't rush to answer the doorbell – make sure there is a clear path for you to get to your front door. Keep the telephone close to where you sit.

Bones and blood pressure

- Bones become more brittle and fragile as you get older and need protecting. Calcium & Colecalciferol (Vitamin D) tablets are often prescribed for this, make sure you take them regularly.
- Blood pressure (BP) can change suddenly from when you are lying down then moving to standing or sitting. Move slowly when going from one to the other to avoid feeling dizzy or sick.

Lighting



- Poor lighting is often the cause of a fall. Make sure there is enough lighting to help you move safely from one place to another.
- Some energy saving bulbs are slow to produce a lot of light. If these are in places like bathrooms, stairs and hallways, change to instant lighting to help you see better, alternatively leave them switched on.
- Make sure switches and cord pulls are within easy-reach during the night. A bedside lamp or a night light could be left on overnight. Have a torch close by.
- On sunny days, if any of your rooms suffer from daylight glare, take extra care moving around. Remember natural light is good for you so try not to shut it out.

Eyesight and exercise



- Regular eye checks are important, you can do simple checks yourself to determine if your eyesight is deteriorating e.g. can you identify a pen, key and a pair of scissors from a certain distance?
- Make sure your glasses fit properly and are regularly cleaned. Put them in a regular place for easy reach and so you know where they are.
- Increasing activity will help your mobility. Regular exercise is good for you and may improve your balance as well as strengthen your muscles. Ask your doctor or a health professional for exercises that would suit you.



Slippers and shoes

- Poorly fitting footwear will increase your falls risk.
- Avoid backless slippers, make sure your footwear fits properly and has a non-slip sole.
- Shoelaces can become a trip hazard, try slip on shoes instead.
- Avoid walking in socks or tights as these are more slippery.

Do you suffer from corns or callouses, pain in your feet that make walking difficult?

If so speak to a chiropodist for advice.

'To Do' Checklist



A white toilet icon inside a blue rounded square.	Toilet	Keep access to the bathroom clear of hazards, give yourself time to get there.
An orange icon showing a test tube and a flask with a chemical reaction.	Urine	Drink plenty of fluids throughout each day.
A blue icon showing a medicine bottle and pills.	Medication and mobility	Review your medication – do you still need everything? Check your equipment for wear and tear.
A pink icon showing a bed.	Beds, bells and blood pressure	Check your bed is the right height and a telephone or call alarm is within easy reach.
A green icon showing a lamp.	Lighting	Improve the lighting in dimly lit areas of your home.
A green icon showing a pair of glasses.	Eyesight and exercise	Have your eyesight checked and take regular exercise.
A red icon showing a pair of slippers.	Slippers and shoes	Make sure your footwear fits properly and the soles are non-slip.

This information is issued by

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