



Oxfordshire Falls Prevention Service

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Introduction

What is a fall?

A fall is an unintentional coming to rest on the floor or a surface lower than the start position with or without injury.
(WHO, 2007)

Falls are not just the result of getting older and many falls can be prevented. Some older people may be reluctant to seek help and advice from a GP and other support services about preventing falls because they believe their concerns will not be taken seriously.

But all healthcare professionals take falls in older people very seriously because of the significant impact they can have on a person's health.

Many falls can be prevented. Oxfordshire Falls Prevention Service offers support and advice to help people avoid falls and regain confidence if they have experienced a fall. Falls are not just the result of getting older.

The Falls Prevention Service

Our falls specialists are qualified health professionals (Nurse or Therapist) who have undertaken specific training in the diagnosis and management of falls.

If needed, we will offer you a one-off appointment for a falls assessment. This appointment will involve gathering a detailed falls and medical history and discuss how you are managing everyday activities. Please be aware that there is a waiting list for appointments.

We carry out a range of investigations which includes blood tests, blood pressure with you lying and standing, bone health assessment, medication review, home hazard assessment, test your strength and balance and we may do other investigations if required.

We will aim to discover the reasons for your falls and make recommendations to reduce your risk of falling and injury in the future. This may include advice to your GP, lifestyle changes and referrals to other services as necessary.

Reducing Your Falls Risks At Home

General

Get help to do things you are unable to do safely on your own

Do not rush to answer the door or telephone

Organise your home so that climbing, stretching and bending are kept to a minimum, and to avoid bumping into things.

Check for trip hazards such as loose wires and rugs

Remove clutter and keep walkways clear

Kitchen

Keep things within easy reach

Avoid climbing on chairs and stools

Clean up spills immediately

Bathroom

Use a non-slip mat in the bath or shower

Consider grab rails by the bath or shower and toilet

Bedroom

Turn on the lights at night when getting out of bed and take your time before moving. Consider having movement sensor lights.

Keep a torch beside your bed in case of a power cut

Avoid wearing long trailing night wear and loose bedding

Ensure you have a clear walkway to your bed

Stairs and Hallway

Use the handrail and make sure it is secure, consider having a handrail both sides of the stairs

Keep stairs clutter free

Put marker strips on the edge of stairs so you can see them more easily

Avoid carrying loads up and down stairs

Make sure halls and stairs are well lit

Outside

Leave an outside light on when returning home at night

Consider fixing loose and uneven pathways

Consider rails for outdoor steps

Avoid bending down and stretching up when hanging out the washing

Have a means of support close by

Ensure you have a means of summoning help e.g wearing your pendant alarm and/or having your mobile telephone to hand

Other Considerations

Eyesight

It is recommended to have your eyes tested annually.

Varifocals and bifocal glasses can increase your risk of falling particularly on steps, so please consider single lenses

Footwear

Wear proper fitting supportive footwear. Take care of your feet by trimming your toenails or use the Podiatry website to find a local practitioner www.rcpod.org.uk then click "find a podiatrist". Or Age UK Footcare service is 01865 717 615.

Fluids

It is recommended that you drink 6-8 cups/mugs/glasses of non-alcoholic drinks a day. Try to increase the amount you drink, unless you have been told you are on a fluid restriction.

Infection

Having an infection will increase your risk of falling. Should you feel you have an infection – this may include urinary symptoms, new cough, having a new confusion or being less steady on your feet. Please seek help as soon as possible either from your GP, 111 or 999, Minor Injuries Unit or First Aid Unit or Pharmacy.

Walking Aids

Using your stick or walker gives your brain extra information to help your balance, as does touching any surface. Use your walking aid all the time if you need one.

Bone Health

Increase your daily intake of calcium and vitamin D (dairy or alternatives products, tinned boned fish, green leafy vegetables and sunlight).

Physical Activity

Try increasing your physical activity, there is evidence that strength and balance exercises decrease the risk of falls. There are a variety of local groups that can help.

Stay strong and steady

<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/oxfordshire/our-services/exerciseandwellbeing/>

Move Together is to support you getting back to exercise
[Move Together | GO Active \(getoxfordshireactive.org\)](http://Move%20Together%20%7C%20GO%20Active%20(getoxfordshireactive.org))

Active at Age UK Oxfordshire They can be contacted on 01235 849 403 active@ageukoxfordshire.org.uk

Balance

Concentrate on doing one thing at a time and stand up and turn slowly.

Get up from your bed and chair slowly and in stages. First sit up, and then sit on the side of the bed before standing. Count to 10 before setting off.

Make sure you have your walking aid to hand or something to hold on to when standing up.

If possible, sit when washing, showering, dressing or when working in the kitchen, otherwise lean against the counter or basin.

Talk to your GP

- you have unintentional weight loss.
- you have any uncontrolled pain.
- you feel low in mood and need help.
- you think your memory is not as good as it once was.
- your feet feel numb or like cotton wool.
- If you have not had your medications reviewed in the last year.

Talk to your GP, Practice Nurse, or Community Nurse

- If you notice any skin discolouration or broken areas, please discuss at the earliest opportunity. You may be at risk of skin damage on your pressure points.

Useful Contacts

- Oxford Health Single Point of Access (SPA) are open 8.00am to 8.00pm, 7 days a week to access various community health services including:
 - Falls Prevention Service
 - Community Physiotherapy
 - Community Occupational Therapy
 - Community Nurses
 - Community Bladder and Bowel

Contact 01865 903750

- Oxfordshire County Council Adult Social Care if you feel you need some help at home or other social care reasons.

Contact 0345 507666

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/social-and-health-care/adult-social-care>

- Age UK are an excellent source of free and independent advice about a wide range of topics.

Contact 0345 450 1276 www.ageuk.org.uk

- Live Well Oxfordshire A Directory of services in Oxfordshire

Contact 01235 849410 <https://livewell.oxfordshire.gov.uk/>

- The Fire Service. Have you got a working smoke alarm and carbon monoxide sensor? If not contact The Fire Service.

Contact <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/fire-and-public-safety/fire-and-rescue-service/safe>
- Carers Oxfordshire -

Contact 01235 424715 www.carersoxfordshire.org.uk
- Oxfordshire Specialist Advisory Service (OSAC) for benefit and money advice.

Contact 01865 410660
- Dementia Oxfordshire provide support for living with Dementia.

Contact 01865 410210 www.dementiaoxfordshire.org.uk
- Attendance Allowance To help with funding your care needs you may be eligible for Attendance Allowance, which is not means tested. Age UK can advise who to contact if you need help completing this form.

Contact 0800 731 0122 www.GOV.UK
- Refuse collection Contact your local council for assisted bin collection

My Homework

What 3 changes can I make to reduce my falls risks?

1

2

3

How will I make these 3 changes to reduce my falls risks?

1

2

3

What to do if you have a fall?

- 1 STOP, THINK, PLAN AND ATTRACT HELP.** Use your pendant alarm or mobile phone or crawl to a telephone, bang on the floor or shout. Try to get up if you can.
- 2 KEEP WARM.** Cover yourself with anything to hand, i.e a towel, rug, or blanket.
- 3 KEEP MOVING.** Move the parts of your body that don't hurt to prevent pressure building up on the bony parts.

Get Involved

We are keen to involve service users in how we develop our service.

Why get involved?

- To use personal experiences of healthcare to help improve quality and develop services
- To use skills to improve healthcare services
- Used lived experiences to empower others and educate staff

What can I get involved with?

- Interviewing potential new staff members
- Presenting a personal healthcare story to help the team or Trust learn from your experiences
- Reviewing and developing essential information such as leaflets, posters and websites
- Helping to develop and deliver training for our staff
- Participating in a focus group to give your views on a specific topic

How do I get involved?

Contact getinvolved@oxfordhealth.nhs.uk

Accessibility

An accessible version of this leaflet can be found on our website: www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/leaflets

Get in touch

Address Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust
 Trust Headquarters
 Littlemore Mental Health Centre
 Sandford Road, Oxford OX4 4XN

Phone 01865 901 000

Email enquiries@oxfordhealth.nhs.uk

Website www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk

Feedback

Our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) provides advice and support to patients, families, and carers, helping to resolve any problems, concerns, or complaints you may have.

Phone 0800 328 7971
Email PALS@oxfordhealth.nhs.uk

Become a member of our foundation trust: www.ohftnhs.uk/membership

Support Oxford Health Charity, making a difference to patients, their families and staff who care for them: www.oxfordhealth.charity