

## Falls Prevention

This leaflet is intended to provide simple practical information about how you can reduce the risk of falling. There are many different reasons why our balance and stability may decrease, which increase the risk of falling.

## Footwear

Good fitting shoes and slippers are vital when it comes to improving your balance. To summarise our 'Footwear' leaflet, the ideal shoe would encompass all the following features:

- It must fit your feet! Long enough, wide enough and deep enough!
- Soft uppers made from a natural fibre, e.g. leather.
- No seams or ridges inside.
- A fastening to hold your foot steady in the shoe (laces, straps or Velcro).
- Room for the toes to move.
- A firm heel counter (supports the heel securely when walking).
- A thick, lightweight, flexible rubber sole of a non-slip material. If you suffer from a condition which causes you to shuffle your feet, however, a

non-slip sole may not be best for you – ask us for advice.

- Low, broad heels.

### You can help by:

- Having your feet measured regularly.
- Not wearing slip on shoes.
- Wearing lightweight shoes.
- Not wearing high heels.

Other good shoe features include:

- Good shock absorption, like a trainer.
- Boots that give ankle support can help on uneven surfaces.

If you wear **slippers** at home:

- Make sure they have a non-slip sole.
- Make sure they have a back (heel counter) to make sure your feet stay securely inside them.
- If necessary, consider wearing a good fitting shoe inside the home rather than a slipper.

### **Look after your feet and yourself**

- Painful feet can cause you to walk awkwardly and put you at risk of stumbling.
- Inspect your feet daily for any problems.

- Care for your nails by filing them straight across and not too short or seeking professional help to cut them.
- File any callus and corns.
- Use a moisturising cream regularly on any areas of dry skin, but not between the toes.
- If you have a loss of sensation in your feet (peripheral neuropathy), you may struggle with balance – wearing shoes with a firm sole can help.
- Keep as fit as you can! Exercise improves muscle strength, which can help with balance.
- Stretching regularly can also help with balance – stiff joints can lead to trips!
- If you wear insoles, make sure they are comfortable and not painful!

### **Further information and help**

The Torbay and South Devon NHS Foundation Trust website has a section full of useful information about reducing the risk of falling. Just visit [www.torbayandsouthdevon.nhs.uk](http://www.torbayandsouthdevon.nhs.uk) and enter 'Falls Prevention' in the search box!

Further information on falls prevention can be also obtained on the **NHS Choices** website, [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk).

**Age UK** also provide a range of useful information on falls prevention. You can visit their website at: [www.ageuk.org.uk](http://www.ageuk.org.uk), or phone them free on 0800 055 6112.

**Torbay TeleHealth Care** are an NHS organisation that can provide a range of monitoring equipment and alarms if you are worried about falling. Their alarms are monitored 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, so assistance is only a click of a button away if or when it is needed.



If you require further information on the products and services that they can offer, you can contact them on:

- 0300 456 4861, or at:
- [enquiries.torbaylifeline@nhs.net](mailto:enquiries.torbaylifeline@nhs.net)

You may need to see a podiatrist (Health and Care Professions Council Registered) for treatment or for advice about suitable footwear.

Please contact the podiatry department on ☎(01803) 217711 (08.45 – 15.45) if you:  
--require further information.  
--if you require this leaflet in a different format

Website:  
[www.torbayandsouthdevon.nhs.uk](http://www.torbayandsouthdevon.nhs.uk)

 TorbayAndSouthDevonFT  
 @TorbaySDevonNHS

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For further assistance or to receive this information in a different format, please contact the department which created this leaflet.

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**Torbay and South Devon**  
NHS Foundation Trust

## PATIENT INFORMATION

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Working with you, for you