

I'm still standing... you can be too

information in
this booklet
can help you
find out how



Help yourself! Reduce risks in your home

Falls and accidents are more common as people get older and many older people experience them each year. Every day the Ambulance Service attends 32 people in Devon who have fallen. This leaflet has been written to help keep you safe and maintain your independence at home by helping you to prevent falls and accidents.

You can reduce the risk of falls, accidents and injuries by:

- taking time to look through this leaflet which offers a common sense approach to making your home a safer place, and considering the safety suggestions.
- If you need help with completing the form or following any of the suggestions contained in this booklet, ask a friend or relative, or refer to the contact list on back page.

As you go through the booklet, note the things you need to do, or people you need to contact, to make an improvement to reduce the risk of a fall or accident in your home.

How do I remove or reduce risks?

Your general health

Have you had an eyesight test in the past year?

If not, visit your optician - eyesight checks are free for the over 60s. Separate glasses for reading can be safer than bifocals. Remember to clean your glasses regularly.

Action I need to take:

Do your feet require attention?

Are you aged 60 or over and do you have a foot problem? Then ask at your GP surgery how to refer yourself for an assessment with the podiatrist for a foot check and advice on how to manage your foot care more effectively. Be aware that you may not be eligible for regular NHS treatment.

Action I need to take:

Have you considered having a flu jab?

Flu can, in the short term, make you more prone to falls and accidents. Flu jabs are available from your GP from October. Remember you need to have the jab every year.

Action I need to take:

Do you get enough exercise?

Keep active. Housework and walking both count. To find out about other ways to keep active, contact your local leisure centre to find out about their over 50's activity programme, or your G.P can refer you to the local exercise referral scheme.

Action I need to take:

Do you have a family history of osteoporosis (brittle bones)?

Bones get thinner with age, so include lots of calcium and vitamin D in your diet. Drink milk and eat dairy products, meat, fish, poultry, fruit and vegetables.

Sunlight is the main source of vitamin D, only a small amount comes from food. It is important to remember that the bones will not absorb calcium properly if they do not have enough Vitamin D3 and as you get older your skin does not make Vitamin D3 as efficiently. So if you are over 65 discuss with your GP supplementation, or buy from any chemist or health food store. Recommended daily amount is 800-1000iu or 20-25ug once a day.

Action I need to take:

Mobility

Have you fallen in the past six months?

If the cause was a hazard in the home, has it been removed or repaired?

Discuss the fall with your doctor and contact Torbay & Southern Devon Care Trust on 01803 219700 to register your fall, if you live in Torbay. South Devon residents please contact The South Devon Care Direct Plus on 0845 155 1007 and get any further advice you may need.

Action I need to take:

Do you have weak muscles, balance problems, stiff joints or have difficulty getting in or out of a chair or the bath?

Physiotherapy or Occupational Therapy may help. You can buy equipment privately or, after assessment, equipment may be supplied by Torbay & Southern Devon Care Trust. Contact 01803 219700.

Action I need to take:

Do you have difficulty walking?

Ensure walking aids are suitable.

Were you measured for them? Replace or repair your walking aids if necessary. Check ferrules (the rubber tips) on walking sticks are not worn and replace them if necessary.

Action I need to take:

Balance and dizziness

Do you get dizzy or lightheaded?

Pause when getting out of bed or up from a chair. Try moving your arms and legs a few times. If symptoms of dizziness are severe or come on suddenly, tell your doctor.

Your blood pressure may need checking.

Action I need to take:

Medicines

Do you take medicines?

If you are concerned they may be causing any dizziness or other side effects, discuss with your pharmacist or family doctor. If possible visit the same pharmacy - many pharmacists place your details on computer so when you present a new prescription or buy medicines they will check for side effects and provide advice. Your local pharmacy is able to do a medicine review and will

contact your GP if changes are needed. If you take sleeping tablets or tablets for pain, you may be drowsy during the night and early morning, so take care if you need to get up for any reason in the night. Blood pressure tablets taken first thing in the morning, may cause slight dizziness when standing up. If you are 75 or over, your medicines should be reviewed by your doctor every 12 months (or every six months if you are taking four or more medicines). If you have not had a review, ask your GP for one.

Action I need to take:

Do you have any out-of-date medicines?

Medicines should not be used after the expiry date of the prescription or 'use by date'. They should not be given to anyone else. Please return out-of-date medicines, or any medicines you no longer require, to your pharmacy.

Action I need to take:

Do you remember when to take your tablets?

Ask your doctor or nurse about help with remembering to take your tablets.

Store medicines in a safe but accessible place.

Action I need to take:

Alcohol

Remember alcohol can affect your balance and has an increased effect as we get older. It does not mix well with some medicines. Ask your pharmacist for advice. If you would like to reduce your alcohol intake, contact Torbay Alcohol Services on 01803 604334 or South Devon Drug and Alcohol Service on 01803 291129 for advice and support.

Action I need to take:

Your wellbeing

Do you have trouble sleeping? Do you become confused or forgetful?

In some cases there may be a reason that your doctor can advise upon and suggest help or treatment. Contact Torbay & Southern Devon Care Trust on 01803 219700 for The Good Sleep Guide on what you can do to help you get a better night's sleep.

Action I need to take:

Do you feel stressed, anxious or depressed?

Stress and anxiety can result in light headedness and dizzy spells. Our legs might take on a jelly-like quality which makes balance difficult; we might also have temporary blurred vision. Depression can make our concentration poor and increase tiredness which can also lead to more falls. Be aware if you are feeling stressed that you are more vulnerable to falls and other accidents. Take things slowly and try not to rush. If you are feeling stressed, anxious or depressed then discuss this with your GP.

Action I need to take:

Is your home warm enough?

It is especially important to keep the living room and bedroom warm, particularly if you have mobility problems. 21 C is the minimum recommended temperature for your lounge. Make sure that you do not turn off the heating to save money.

You may be eligible for a home efficiency grant. Contact Devon Energy Saving Trust; call 0800 512012 (calls are free from a landline).

Action I need to take:

Common hazards in the home

Floor coverings

Replace or repair worn or loose floor coverings. Make sure mats and floors are non-slip. Tape down edges of loose rugs or remove them.*

Mop up spills straight away.

Action I need to take:

Out of reach items

Keep items you use most often in places that are easy to reach. If necessary you can buy reaching aids. Ask someone to replace light bulbs.* Contact your local home improvement agency for advice and help with repairs and adaptations.

Action I need to take:

Handrails

Make sure your handrails are securely fitted. Would it help to have a handrail fitted each side?*

Action I need to take:

If you would like a workman who is on the local Age UK Home maintenance register call 0845 296 7810.

**You can get help with small jobs like these through the Handyperson Service at Age UK 01803 555181(for Torbay area only) .*

Tripping hazards

Make sure there are no trailing flexes or clutter on the floor or stairs. Avoid clothes which are too long.

Action I need to take

Pets

Know where your pets are and keep them from under your feet.

Action I need to take:

Footwear

Make sure that slippers and shoes are well-fitting and in good condition. Avoid high heels, mules, sling backs and thick-soled shoes. Seek advice from a podiatrist if you think your footwear puts you at risk of having a fall.

Action I need to take:

Lighting

Always use your lights and ensure adequate lighting. Do not use energy saving light bulbs on stairs unless you intend to keep the light on all the time when it is dark.

Action I need to take:

Clutter

Keep stairs free from clutter. Take care when carrying items on the stairs.

Action I need to take:

Hallways

Consider having a cage fitted on the back of your letterbox, to reduce the need for bending over when collecting letters.

Action I need to take:

Position and height of furniture

Ensure that furniture is arranged so that you can move around easily. Keep walkways clear of furniture.

Consider removing castors from moveable furniture.

Action I need to take:

Fire

Use a fire guard on open fires or gas/electric fires. Never rest clothes or place newspapers on the guard.

Action I need to take:

Kitchen equipment

Use a timer or alarm clock to remind you when food is cooked. Keep saucepan handles turned away from you when cooking. Keep work surfaces around the cooker tidy and have plenty of space when handling hot food or liquids. Never leave pans unattended.

Turn off gas rings etc. when answering the door or telephone.

Action I need to take:

Kettle

Unplug your kettle before filling it. Consider a cordless kettle or use a jug to fill your kettle. Only boil as much water as you need.

Action I need to take:

Bath

If you are not able to get out of the bath easily, would it help to get grab rails, a non-slip bath mat or bath aids? Beware of using oils – they may make the bath slippery. When filling a bath ensure you put cold water in first. Always test the water before getting in the bath or shower. Torbay & Southern Devon Care Trust may be able to help on 01803 219700. South Devon residents please contact South Devon Care Direct Plus on 0845 1551007 (charged at local rate)

Action I need to take:

Basin

Sit at the basin while washing if you have difficulty standing to wash. Try a perching stool if you have room.

Action I need to take:

Bedroom

Make sure the bedspread or duvet is not too long. Avoid trailing night clothes.

Sit when dressing rather than standing on one leg.

Action I need to take:

Electric blankets

Be aware of the safety instructions for your electric blanket. The Fire Service recommend you check the wiring and plug, never fold it, keep it dry and replace it every ten years or when damaged.

Action I need to take:

Bedroom lighting

Have a bedside lamp or torch by the bed. Always switch on a light before getting out of bed. Consider having a phone beside your bed.

Action I need to take:

Outside your home

Drive and path

Look out for uneven ground or broken pavements! If it's icy, wet or windy, stay indoors and don't be tempted to go out. Are paths and entrances well lit? Do external steps have handrails? Torbay & Southern Devon Care Trust may be able to assist, contact 01803 219700; or Care Direct for residents in Southern Devon Care Direct 0845 1551 007.

Action I need to take:

Garden

Do not leave tools lying around. Wind up the garden hose. Always use a circuit breaker when using power tools or mowing the lawn.

Action I need to take:

General safety suggestions

Gas and electrical appliances

Make sure your boiler, gas and electrical appliances are serviced regularly. If you are over 60 you can have certain gas and electric appliances inspected free once a year. For further information contact your supplier or and ask to be put on the Priority Service Register, or if this is unsatisfactory contact Consumer Direct 0845 4040506 (local rate number)

Action I need to take:

Smoke alarms

Fit smoke alarms on all levels and make sure you test them regularly. You may be able to receive one free of charge. Contact 0800 7311 822 for a free home safety visit from the local Fire Brigade.

Action I need to take:

Electric sockets

Do not overload electric sockets. If plugs look brown or wires are frayed stop using them and get them repaired or replaced immediately. If in doubt, seek professional advice.

Action I need to take:

Keeping warm

Make sure you keep warm in winter. Several layers of light clothing is better than one heavy garment. Where possible, cover your head.

Action I need to take:

Emergency situations

Consider getting a personal alarm - especially if you live alone. This would enable you to get help if you fall or injure yourself. Contact Torbay Lifeline Alarm Service 0300 456 4861 or Care Direct 0800 444 000 for South Devon areas.

Consider using a cordless phone around the house, or getting an answering machine rather than rushing to the phone. Would it help to have a phone beside your chair?

Action I need to take:

Winter hazards

Keeping food cupboards well stocked, in case there is snow or ice on paths, steps and pavements, is helpful if you don't want to go out.

Action I need to take:

Financial worries?

Your local Citizens Advice Bureau and Age UK can give you advice and provide advocacy services.

If you are receiving a charged service through social services you can get advice by contacting Care Direct 0845 1551007 (charged at local rate) or Torbay and Southern Devon Care Trust (FAB) 01803 219777 for advice on benefits and assistance with benefits claims.

If you fall, don't panic

Try to summon help

Shout or bang on the wall, or if possible crawl to the telephone. An emergency response system would prove invaluable in these circumstances.

Assess the situation

Decide if you can get up.

If you are hurt and think you can't get up

Rest and wait

Move to a safe surface

If you have fallen on a hard surface, try and move to a carpeted area.

Keep warm

Try to cover yourself and try to move out of draughts.

Keep moving

Don't lie in one position for too long, roll from side to side and move your arms and legs if possible.

If you think you can, get up

1. Roll onto your hands and knees.
2. Crawl to a stable piece of furniture such as bed or chair.
3. Place your hands on to the bed or chair for support.
4. Place one foot flat on floor bending your knee in front of your tummy.
5. Lean forward. Push on to your hands until you bring the other foot beside the first.
6. Turn and sit on the bed or chair.
7. Rest for a while before getting up.

Useful contacts

NHS 111 for health advice - You can call 111 when you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency. NHS 111 is a fast and easy way to get the right help, whatever the time.

Devon County Council - 0845 155 1015

Torbay Council - 01803 201201

Teignbridge District Council - 01626 361101

South Hams District Council - 01803 861234

West Devon Borough Council - 01822 813600

Torbay and South Devon NHS Podiatry Service

Podiatry Office

Castle Circus Health Centre

Abbey Road

Torquay TQ2 5YH

01803 217711

Care Direct (Devon County Council) – 0845 1551 007

For advice and information in your area

Age UK (Devon)

Devon Advice Hotline- 08452 967810

For information, advice and support for older people

Age UK national resources (previously Age Concern and Help the Aged):

Tavis House, Tavistock Square, London, WC1H 9NA

Tel: 020 7278 1114

Age UK Handyperson - 01803 841846 * (Torbay area only)

Handyperson scheme - free labour. Charge for materials only.

Disability Information Service (DIS) - 01803 552175 (Torbay area)

Citizens Advice Bureau

Advice Line - 08444 111444 (calls charged at 5p per minute)

Torquay branch - 01803 521726

For all other local branches – 08444 111 444

Community Alarm – 0300 456 4861 (calls charged at local rate)

Hospital Osteoporosis Helpline - 01803 655603 (leave a message and you will be called back)

Devon Energy Saving Trust

For home insulation advice and available grants

Freephone - 0800 512012 www.energysavingtrust.org.uk

Torbay and Southern Devon Care Trust

Torbay Area

Fitbay - 01803 321867

For advice on keeping fit in the Bay and Bay Walks - escorted, graded walks and activities designed for improved health.

Stop Smoking Service - 01803 299160

Healthy Lifestyles Team - 01803 208840

Expert Patient Programme - 08009 885550

Financial and Benefits Team (FAB) - 01803 219700

Patients Advice & Liaison Service (PALS)

Freephone - 0800 032 7657 or 01803 219700

Primary Care Alcohol Service - 01803 604330

South Devon Area

Stop Smoking Service - 01884 836024

South Devon Drug and Alcohol Service 01803 291129

Walking for Health

West Devon area – 01822 813571

Moretonhampstead area – 01626 215603

South Hams area – 01822 813571

Patient Advice & Liaison Service(PALS) - 01392 267665

Other local contacts

Devon & Somerset Fire Services 0800 7311 822

Neighbourhood Police – Non emergency dial 101

Mental Health Information Officer (Torbay area only)

Torbay area - 01803 546474

Signposts - 01803 666620 (Torbay area only) (Carers Information and Advice)

Domestic Violence

Torbay area - 01803 217614

Newton Abbot, South Hams, West Devon – 0345 155 1074

Torbay Street Wardens - 01803 208091

Samaritans

Torbay branch - 01803 299999

Exeter branch - 01392 411711

Plymouth branch - 01752 221666

www.tsdhc.nhs.uk

www.facebook.com/tsdhct

@TSDHC

After any fall, report it to your GP and seek medical attention.

Register your fall by phoning 01803 219700.

Are you falling or worried about falling? Yes. But what do I do now?

Falls can lead to injury, reduced quality of life, reduced mobility and loss of independence.

It is important to tell your doctor if you have a fall or start to feel unsteady, even if you feel well otherwise. There are ways to reduce the risk of falling in the future and give you more confidence in your daily life.

People who have already had a fall are more likely to fall in the future although there are ways to avoid this.

Managing Falls

There can be many different reasons for someone falling. This means that there are also many different ways of managing falls.

Every person is different and will have different reasons for falling. It is important if you have had a fall to report this to your doctor.

If you are at high risk of falling or have had a fall recently, you will need to be individually assessed.

**Look out for your local
Active For Life event
held annually**

Falls Screening Tool

Please answer the following five questions:

1. Have you had a fall in the last year?

YES ☐ NO ☐

If yes, how many falls have you had in the last 12 months?

2. Are you taking four or more types of medication per day?

YES ☐ NO ☐

3. Have you had a stroke or do you suffer from Parkinson's Disease?

YES ☐ NO ☐

4. Do you have any problems with your balance?

YES ☐ NO ☐

5. Are you UNABLE to rise from a dining chair without using your arms to help you stand up?

YES ☐ NO ☐

What to do now

Please complete this tear-off slip and either send or hand it in to your GP surgery.

Approximate date of most recent fall:

Time of fall: am/pm

Name:

Address:

DOB:

Torbay residents - please record falls on the falls register on 01803 219700.

For GP surgeries across Torbay and Southern Devon use only:

Please read code 16D for falls. If the answer is 'YES' to 3 or more questions on the screening tool your patient is at risk of future falls and may benefit from further assessment. For those at low risk <3 please advise accordingly. There is falls prevention advice on the Care Trust's public website.

Healthy Lifestyles

"Small steps...
right direction"



Torbay and Southern Devon
Health and Care
NHS Trust



Stop Smoking Service

01803 299160

stopsmoking.torbay@nhs.net

- advice for people wanting to quit
- individual tailored support with a stop smoking advisor
- quit groups
- advisor training
- smoke free homes

You are up to four times more likely to quit smoking for good with NHS support. We make quitting easier

Community Fitness Team

01803 321867

Walking Programmes

- Bay Walks (health walks programmes)
- Pedometer Loans
- Nordic Walking[£]

Exercise Programmes

- Fitbay GP referral programme*[£]
- Cardiac rehabilitation*[£]
- Strength and balance exercises for older adults*

Health Trainers

01803 208840

one to one support on:

- changing your eating habits
- changing your drinking habits
- becoming more active
- stress control
- quitting smoking
- feeding and weaning baby (early years Health Trainers only)

Public Health Training courses that help people to support others to make healthier choices and hear about local and national support services.

Community Nutrition Team

01803 208840

- **Family weight management programme** - to support school aged children and their parents/guardians to reduce screen time leisure and improve eating habits.
- **Adult weight management groups** - a free 16 week programme offering support and advice to those trying to lose weight. Groups are held at a variety of times and venues within Torbay*
- **Diabetes group education** - for individuals newly diagnosed with type 2 diabetes, and their carers*

*indicates you need a referral from your GP or practice nurse.

[£] There is a charge for this service



www.tsdhc.nhs.uk
(search for lifestyles team)



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