

Nottinghamshire County

How to avoid slips trips and falls in and around your home



Ashfield and Mansfield Falls Implementation Group

Managing your Medicines



Some medicines, including those you buy over the counter, have side effects that can make you more likely to fall. By taking a few simple precautions you can remove or reduce the risk

There are some special groups of medicines to watch out for, these are:

- ♦ Medicines for lowering blood pressure or some heart conditions. These may cause dizziness or a feeling of faintness, so take care to sit or stand up slowly and carefully
- ♦ Water tablets (Diuretics) help your body to get rid of excess water. They make you want to go to the toilet more often. Take care not to rush to the toilet as this may cause you to trip and fall. Leave a light on at night so you can see your way more clearly
- ♦ Medicines to help you sleep or antidepressants can sometimes make you feel a little drowsy or confused. If this is happening tell your doctor and take time to get your balance if you have to get up in the night

Your doctor will need to review your medicines every year, especially if you take 4 or more medicines a day, to make sure they are still right for you. If you have not had your medicines reviewed for more than one year, please go and see your doctor or practice nurse

Tips on taking medicines



- When you collect or buy your medicines make sure you can see, read and understand the instructions. If you are in any doubt ask your pharmacist to explain
- Only take medicines prescribed for you
- If you forget to take your medicine **do not** take two doses next time
- Make sure you store your medicines safely
- Be sure to finish each course of treatment
- Do not flush medicines down the toilet. Return them to your pharmacist for safe disposal
- Check with your doctor or pharmacist before taking both over the counter **and** prescribed medicines
- If you are unsure what your medicines are for, how to take them, whether they are working for you, or if you feel they are causing problems, please talk to your doctor, practice nurse or pharmacist as soon as possible



Healthy Eating



Healthy eating is important to keep your bones and muscles strong. Make sure you eat enough food to avoid unplanned weight loss and to get plenty of calcium and Vitamin D

Choose 3 good portions of calcium rich foods every day such as:

- ♦ Any type of milk
(a portion = 1 glass—200ml or 1/3rd of a pint of milk)
- ♦ Any type of cheese
(a portion = 25g (1oz) —match box size)
- ♦ Milk based food like yoghurt, custard, milk pudding
(a portion = 1 carton or bowl that is 150g (5oz)
- ♦ Tinned fish with bones, and eat the bones
(a portion = 70g or 1/3rd of a tin)

If your appetite is poor, try using full fat versions of dairy products as they contain more energy

Vitamin D helps calcium to be absorbed into your bones. A main source of Vitamin D is the action of sunlight on skin, so try spending half an hour each day outside, between April and September. Remember to use a sun cream

Eat foods high in Vitamin D like liver, oily fish (herrings, kippers, mackerel, sardines, tuna, salmon, trout), whole grain fortified breakfast cereals, margarines and spreads, well cooked eggs, skimmed milk powder or evaporated milk. Low levels of Vitamin D are mostly found in older people who are house bound



For all round Good Health

For all round good health try and have:

- ◆ **3 regular meals a day and 2 Healthy snacks**



- ◆ **5 portions of fruit and vegetables a day**



- ◆ **Food rich in starch and fibre like bread, rice pasta, cereals and potatoes**



- ◆ **Drink 6 –9 cups of fluid a day such as water, milky drinks and fruit juice. Try to limit tea and coffee to 2 to 4 cups a day. Only drink alcohol in moderation**



If you have any concerns or queries speak to your doctor or practice nurse

Best Foot Forward

By looking after your feet and shoes you can help reduce the risk of a fall. The more active you are the better your balance is likely to be



To keep your joints mobile and muscles strong you need to be able to walk confidently and comfortably

If you have a painful foot problem see a podiatrist. You may be able to get a National Health Service (NHS) consultation, so ask your doctor or practice nurse for advice

If you need to see a private podiatrist, always look for the initials HPC (Health Professional Council) after their name. Follow the advice you are given to keep your feet fit and pain free

A good shoe is not always an expensive one, but it should suit the shape of your foot. Buy a good pair of shoes for everyday wear, even if you spend most of your time indoors



Tips for Choosing Footwear

- ♦ Check you have the right size. Cramped feet do not allow you to walk naturally
- ♦ Avoid backless shoes or sandals with sling backs because they do not support the foot and can make the ankle unstable
- ♦ Look for low, broad heeled shoes with a firm back, sufficiently deep toe box and cushioned sole
- ♦ Laces or broad straps give best support. If your feet swell during the day adjust the fastening



- ♦ Always check your laces are tied properly and are not trailing along the floor which may cause you to trip
- ♦ Be wary of deeply ridged or smooth shiny soles, they could catch on uneven surfaces or send you sliding
- ♦ Avoid walking around the house in nylon tights or socks, it is easy to slip or step on sharp objects
- ♦ Wear well fitting slippers with non slip soles and a Velcro tab which is quick and easy to fasten and holds the foot securely
- ♦ Keep your shoes in good repair and throw away shoes with badly worn heels or which are loose or sloppy
- ♦ Sit down to put shoes on or take them off. Avoid standing on one leg to do this as there is greater risk of falling

Exercise

Exercise can play a large part in keeping you fit and active and it can be fun!



A fall can often lead to fear and loss of confidence. Sometimes, to avoid another fall, some people restrict their activity. The less active you are the more likely your joints will become stiff, your muscles weaker and your balance poor, increasing your risks of another fall

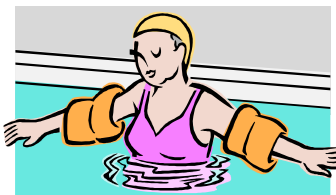
Even healthy older people naturally lose strength and this can dramatically increase following illness or surgery. Periods of being immobile can leave you feeling too weak to carry out everyday tasks

Gentle exercise for 30 minutes a day, 5 days a week can improve general health, strength and balance

Keeping fit and healthy will help you stay mobile and independent

It is never too late to take up some type of exercise to improve your suppleness and strength. If you don't get much exercise at the moment, it is best to start gently

See your doctor if you have any concerns about starting exercise.



Tips on Exercising



- ♦ Set yourself realistic and possible targets
- ♦ Build up your exercises gradually and listen to your body
- ♦ Don't exercise if you are tired, unwell or have just eaten
- ♦ Wear loose clothing and soft sole shoes
- ♦ Remember to breathe properly. Don't hold your breath while doing any movement
- ♦ Exercise should not cause pain. If it does—**STOP**
- ♦ It is not unusual to feel a bit stiff and tired after the first few times you exercise. If this continues see your doctor. If you feel any dizziness, nausea, pain, cold sweats, excessive stiffness or tiredness, stop exercising straight away and see your doctor

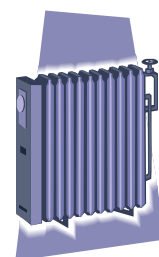
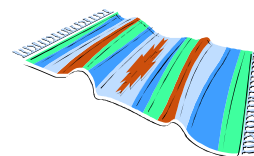
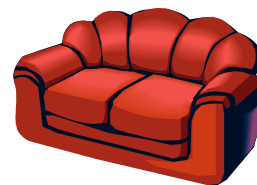
Finding out about local exercise programmes to improve your strength and balance

- ♦ First try your local GP. He/she may be able to recommend a local exercise class
- ♦ Some local councils run exercise classes aimed at certain community groups
- ♦ Your local Community and Voluntary Service organisation may have contact details
- ♦ Local Age Concern centres, leisure centres, libraries, County Contact and the local press may have information on local exercise classes

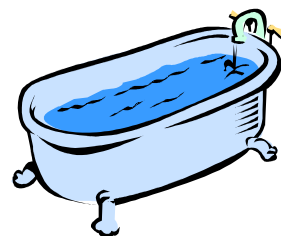
Home Safety Check List in and around the home

Top Tips

- ♦ Arrange furniture so that you have enough space to walk safely, especially if you use a walking aid
- ♦ Make sure you can easily reach your window catches and curtains without over stretching
- ♦ Keep carpets in good repair. Mats and rugs can cause slips and falls so secure their edges with strong tape
- ♦ Make sure your outside door is easy to open
- ♦ Think about buying a wire basket to fit over your letterbox to avoid bending to pick up your mail
- ♦ Tall milk bottle holders are useful
- ♦ Have a handrail on the stairs and don't put items on the stairs, you may not see them and trip
- ♦ Think about how you would get help if you fell inside or outside your home and make plans to deal with this
- ♦ Muscles work better when they are warm, so keeping your home comfortably warm is important



Bathroom



- ♦ You should be able to get on and off the toilet and in and out of the bath or shower easily. If not, well placed grab rails can make it easier for you
- ♦ A non slip bath or shower mat is a sensible investment
- ♦ A stool or chair in the bathroom is useful for you to sit down and dry yourself
- ♦ Do not lock the bathroom door, in case someone should need to come in and help you

Lighting and wiring



- ♦ Keep stairs and living areas well lit at all times with high wattage lights. Use a light if you have to get up in the night
- ♦ Make sure all electrical flexes and telephone cords are tucked away or taped down

Telephone



- ♦ Put a chair by your telephone so you don't have to stand or rush to answer it
- ♦ Think about having a cordless telephone which you can carry around with you or a telephone by your bed
- ♦ A pendant alarm could summon help if you fell and were unable to get up

Living room

- ♦ Check that small items of furniture like tables or footstools are not in your way
- ♦ Don't leave anything on your floor especially newspapers or glossy magazines
- ♦ Your usual chair should be safe and easy to get out of and when you sit down should not move
- ♦ A television remote control will save you from bending down to change channel



Kitchen

- ♦ Arrange things to cut down on bending and lifting
- ♦ Leave out items you use regularly such as crockery
- ♦ Use a tall trolley or a walking frame caddy to carry food and drink into another room, especially if you use a walking aid



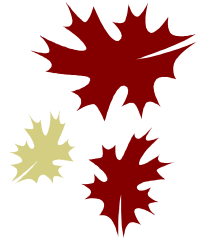
Bedroom

- ♦ Your bed should be at a good height for getting in and out of
- ♦ Try to take your time getting out of bed to adjust your balance. Sit on the side of the bed for a couple of minutes before standing, thus reducing the risk of dizziness
- ♦ If you need to use the toilet frequently during the night a commode or urine bottle might be useful



Outside

- ♦ Keep paths clear of leaves and in good repair
- ♦ White paint on the edge of a step can improve your awareness of it
- ♦ Do not have your washing line too high and have it over ground that is level and safe
- ♦ Avoid using your wheelie bin in bad weather, as you may slip or trip



Seeing the Risks

- ♦ Regular eye tests; keep your spectacle prescription up to date and detect any eye problem early by having regular sight tests. Normally every 1-2 years but your optician or optometrist may advise differently
- ♦ If you have been prescribed glasses – wear them!
- ♦ Make sure your glasses fit well and are in good condition. Your optician can adjust your glasses if they slip or don't sit straight
- ♦ Stick with what you know. Getting used to bifocals or varifocals can be tricky in the beginning, but if you have worn them for years are quite safe. If you wear two pairs don't walk around in your reading glasses



Alcohol and Falls



Drinking alcohol can contribute to increasing the potential of a fall. Older people are more susceptible to the effects of alcohol than younger people



The effects include:

Alcohol in small quantities may aid sleep, in larger quantities it can cause disturbed sleep patterns during the night

Impaired co-ordination and memory, which can lead to falls and general confusion

A higher concentration of alcohol in the blood in the elderly than in younger people

Elderly car drivers are more likely to be involved in a motoring accident after drinking even a small amount of alcohol, than they are if they have drunk none

Alcohol in moderate amounts can cause the effects of some drugs to be exaggerated, such as diazepam (Valium)

Alcohol when drunk at higher levels can also cause thinning of the bones

Please speak to your GP or nurse if you have questions or concerns about drinking alcohol

What should I do if I am unable to get up after a fall?



- Get help and try not to panic. Try to attract attention by banging on the floor or wall. Use your personal alarm or call 999 if you can reach a phone
- If you can't get help and you are not hurt, try to get up. A lot of the problems people experience after a fall come from lying on the ground for too long and getting cold. If you can't get up, use a piece of sturdy furniture to try and pull yourself up
- ♦ Keep warm. If you're unable to get up, tense your arm and leg muscles and cover yourself with a coat or whatever you can find to keep yourself warm

The importance of having your fall assessed



Always tell your GP if you have a fall, as there are a number of things that can be done to help you maintain your independence

You should be offered a falls risk assessment by a trained healthcare professional. This may be done at the doctor's surgery or you may be asked to go to a specialist clinic. The aim is to uncover anything that might make you more likely to fall and to see if there are specific things that can be done to help

The assessment should:

- Include simple tests to see if your balance and walking could be improved
- Consider hazards in your home
- Assess the medicines you take
- Check your eyesight and glasses
- Find out if you have any fears about falling
- See if you have any foot problems
- Check whether you are at risk of Osteoporosis
- Test how well your body's nervous system is working
- Check whether you have problems with memory
- Explore any unexplained blackouts or faints

The doctor or nurse will then devise a plan to help you reduce your risk of falling

The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) has produced a free information booklet on falls for older people, their families and carers.

[Visit the NICE website](#) to download a copy

Useful Local Contacts

Ashfield Links Forum

Address:

The Council Offices

Fox Street

Sutton in Ashfield

Notts

NG17 1BD

Tel: 01623 555551 Website: www.ashfieldlinks.org.uk

Ashfield Links Forum works with the voluntary and community sector across Ashfield. It's role is to support and represent the sector. Signposting people towards groups and organisations, putting on events to raise awareness of health and wellbeing topics and working with self help groups are all part of it's work to help contribute to reducing health inequalities in Ashfield.

Mansfield Community and Voluntary Service

Address

36 Wood Street

Mansfield

Notts

NG18 1QA

Telephone: 01623 651177 Website: www.mansfieldcvs.org

Mansfield CVS provides advice and support to the community of Mansfield and District, focusing on Volunteering, Training, Unemployment, Health and Social Care, Older Peoples' services and Group support. The First Contact Signposting Scheme hosted by Mansfield CVS provides people aged 60+ with a range of services to help them stay safe and independent in their own homes.

Mansfield & Ashfield Falls Prevention Service

Address:

Nottinghamshire Community Health
Mansfield Community Hospital
Stockwell Gate
Mansfield
NG 18 5QJ

Telephone: 01623 785157 or 785114

Website: <http://nww.nottscommunityhealth.nhs.uk>

Mansfield & Ashfield Falls Prevention Service provides a rehabilitation service for people who have fallen or who are at risk of falls

We are a community service and our Multi-disciplinary Therapy Team will, through assessment and on going programmes of education, exercise and equipment provision, work towards preventing further falls and promoting confidence and independence

PALS -Patient Advice and Liaison Service

Address:

FREEPOST RRZL-GBTT-RJUJ
Patient Advice and Liaison Service
NHS Nottinghamshire County
NG21 0HJ

Telephone: 0800 0283693

Website: www.nottspct.nhs.gov

The NHS in Nottinghamshire wants to hear from members of the public as this helps us to improve services. There is a range of ways you can get involved, whether you have a lot or a little time to spare, there are opportunities for you to have your say. Contact PALS for more information

Mansfield District Council

Address

Civic Centre

Chesterfield Road South

Mansfield

Notts

NG19 7BH

Telephone: 01623 463470

Website: www.mansfield.gov.uk

Active Choices is a gentle activity programme for people who are currently doing very little or no exercise. There are a variety of activities available which are all Free

The timetable provided is inclusive for all abilities; it can be taken at a gentle pace and at an easy level allowing every participant to take part in an enjoyable experience

Ashfield District Council

Address

Urban Road

Kirkby in Ashfield

Nottinghamshire

NG17 8DA

Telephone: 01623 457000

Website: www.ashfield-dc.gov.uk

The strategic leisure unit at Ashfield District Council aims to develop opportunities for leisure, recreational and social activity that encourage pride, improve health & personal responsibility. The services delivered in the strategic Leisure Unit include:

- Leisure centre performance

- Sports development

- Healthy living/physical activity

- Health Trainer service (including information about falls prevention classes throughout Ashfield)

Nottinghamshire County Council

Address:

Nottinghamshire County Council

County Hall

West Bridgford

Nottingham

Post Code: NG2 7QP

Tel: 08449 808080

Minicom:

01623 434993

Website:

www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk

Please ring the 'Golden Number' listed above if you require any Nottinghamshire County Council Services for example day centres, lunch clubs, meals at home, disabled transport options, home care

Opening times are: Monday to Friday 8 am – 8 pm

Saturday 8 am – 12 pm

Calls cost 3p per minute from BT landlines (inc VAT).

Mobile and other providers' costs may vary

See www.bt.com/pricing.

There are also local social services offices detailed in the telephone directory

County Contact (Ashfield & Mansfield)

Address:

Mansfield

County Contact Point
Nottinghamshire County Council
16 Regent Street,
Mansfield
NG18 1SS

Ashfield

County Contact Point
Nottinghamshire County Council
Idlewells Shopping Centre
Sutton in Ashfield
NG17 1BP

Telephone: 01623 476806 email: enquiries@nottscc.gov.uk
Website: www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk

County Contact Points are high quality *One Stop Shops* by Nottinghamshire County Council. Based in Sutton in the Idlewells Shopping Centre and in Mansfield on Regent Street, we offer free advice and information on all Council services under one roof:-

Problems with mobility? Ask us about a Blue Badge & Special Access Permit

Want to stay independent in your home? Pop in and speak to us

Age Concern Nottingham and Nottinghamshire

Address:

Bradbury House,
12 Shakespeare Street
Nottingham
NG1 4FQ

Telephone: 0115 840011

Website: www.ageconcernnotts.org.uk

Age Concern provides a range of service in Ashfield and Mansfield Districts which encourage older people to keep active and independent and can support those at risk of falling:

- ♦ Lunch clubs at five venues in Ashfield District; all welcome, contact Tel 07872 839631
- ♦ Sutton Exercise groups at three venues in Sutton plus two lunch clubs. Contact Tel 07872 839617
- ♦ Fit as a Fiddle exercise for active older people in Sutton and Mansfield. Contact Tel 01623 488211
- ♦ Kindred Spirits, social activities for active older people, contact Tel 01623 488211
- ♦ Shopping service in Ashfield and Mansfield, contact: 01623 488218/488221
- ♦ Age Concern Mansfield, lunch clubs and day centre, contact: 01623 845406
- ♦ Community Outreach Advisors for the Over 50s, contact 07872 839561



10 Top Tips

to Prevent Falls and Stay Healthy

1. Get your medication reviewed
2. Eat a sensible diet and drink plenty of fluids
3. Care for your feet
4. Wear sensible footwear even in the home
5. Keep as active as you can
6. How safe is your home?
 reduce the clutter, remove rugs
7. Use walking aids that have been issued for you
8. Have your eyes tested yearly
9. Only drink alcohol in moderation
10. If you have a slip, trip or fall – consult your GP

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to Bassetlaw NHS Primary Care Trust from which this booklet has been reproduced

To Ashfield Links Forum for collating this version of the booklet

To all the members of the Ashfield & Mansfield Falls Implementation Group for their valuable input

To Age Concern/Help the Aged for additional information



Nottinghamshire County