

Falls – Making decisions about care

We have designed this leaflet to let you know about some of the preventative measures that can be taken to reduce a risk of falls. There are many aspects that can affect a person's risk of falling, such as treatments and fatigue caused by illness. Some people find that as their condition changes feeling unsteady on their feet can become more common, and whilst wanting to maintain as much independence as possible certain considerations can make a difference.

Things you can do to reduce the risk of falling:

Looking after yourself:

- Wear your glasses, ensuring they are the correct prescription by having regular eye checks (home visits can be requested from your optician).
- Also ensure your hearing aids are in place, as your balance can be affected by hearing and ear problems.
- Keep your feet in good condition and consider seeing a chiropodist if you require help. Make sure all footwear, including slippers is well-fitting and has good grip. Sock and tight aids are available which will minimise your risk of falling from bending.
- If you experience dizziness on standing, contact your GP.
- If you feel lightheaded as you've not eaten much that day, take extra care when mobilising and consider regular snacks and drinks – little and often will help.
- Certain medications may increase your risk of falls. Your GP or Farleigh Hospice team will be able to review these for you.
- Try to keep as active as your condition safely allows. This may be doing specific exercises or just having a walk around your garden.
- Your mobility aid needs to be specific for you. It should be the correct height and be in good condition. One of our physiotherapists can assess if are unsure or your needs change.

Looking after your environment:

- Check your environment for any trip hazards, for example loose rugs, carpets, furniture, blankets and bedding, or trailing wires. Consider extra handrails on steps and stairs.
- Make sure you have adequate lighting, especially at night time. If you need to get up to use the toilet consider turning on the light on, or alternatively use low level plug in lights between your bedroom and bathroom. You may also find it easier to use a commode or urinal overnight. If you have an increased need to use the toilet speak to your GP or the team at Farleigh.
- In your bathroom you could use a bath seat, raised toilet seat or a non-slip rubber bath mat. Consider adding rails beside your bath and toilet.
- Ensure your chair, or bed, is high enough for you to stand up from easily. Stand for a while before setting off from your chair or bed. Use mobility aids that have been supplied for you and please let us know if you are unsure.

If you have a fall:

- If you are unable to get up use your pendant alarm, mobile phone or shout for help.
- If you have fallen on a cold floor or lino see if you can shuffle to a carpeted area.
- Find something to cover yourself with, e.g bedclothes, newspaper additional clothing if it is within reach.
- Keep moving as much as possible to stay warm and avoid ulcers or sores to your skin from lying on the floor.
- If you need to empty your bladder use something like a towel or newspaper to soak it up, and then shuffle to a dry area if possible.
- Update your team at Farleigh Hospice.

How to get up from the floor:

- 1** Don't panic – give yourself time to recover, but also do not attempt to get up if you feel that you have a significant injury.
- 2** Roll onto your hands and knees.
- 3** Crawl to a stable piece of furniture that you can use to help you.
- 4** Holding onto the support, keep one knee on the floor, raise the other knee until your foot is on the floor.
- 5** Push down on your front foot and steady yourself with your hands to rise into a standing position.
- 6** Sit down to rest and alert someone as soon as you are able.



Falls

If you have regular falls consider:

- A pendant alarm (ensuring you have this with you at all times) for summoning assistance.
- Keeping a bottle of water and a blanket at a low level should you not be able to get up.



Comments

We are always pleased to hear any comments about the services we are providing. Your feedback helps us to maintain a high standard of service and we are really keen to hear from you. You can also complete our feedback survey via our website.

Please visit: www.farleighospice.org/feedback

Useful Numbers:

General enquiries: 01245 457300

Inpatient Unit (IPU): 01245 457361

Advice Line: 01245 455478 (8am - 8pm)