

Council and NHS begin campaign against falling over



It is a simple fact that more older people end up in hospital as a result of a fall than just about any other reason.

A new campaign to encourage them to keep fit and healthy by avoiding falls has now been launched by the council and NHS Lothian.

‘Take Small Steps to Stay on your Feet’ gives older people [five easy tips](#) to try and prevent falls and also information about what to do if they do suffer one.

Falls are a major problem for older people with more than 30% of over 65s falling every year, with many more than once.

They can cause physical injuries such as fractures and head injuries and also psychological harm along with longer term problems such as disability, loss of independence and social isolation.

In Scotland the cost of falls by older people living in the community has been estimated to exceed £471m every year.

The new campaign has five top tips for older people:

- Get checked out top to toe – have your eyes and hearing tested regularly, wear shoes and slippers that are comfortable and fit properly, and get your GP to regularly review your prescription medications
- Calcium keeps bones strong – eat a well balanced diet that contains calcium rich foods like dairy products, green leafy vegetables, bread and fish
- Get enough Vitamin D – to help keep your bones strong. Natural sunlight is a good way or take supplements from

your GP or pharmacist

- Stay active – exercise such as walking, gardening and dancing can strengthen muscles, bones and improve balance
- Clear your way at home – make sure there's nothing that might cause someone to trip or bump into them such as rugs, loose carpets and items lying on the floor

In addition, the campaign advises older people what to do if they have a fall. These include: move to a soft surface, keep warm, call for help and keep moving. There is also information about the best ways to get up after a fall.

Councillor Ricky Henderson, Health and Social Care Convener for the City of Edinburgh Council, said: "It's important people realise that falling is not an inevitable part of getting older as many falls can be prevented. By making a few simple changes, older people can reduce the risk of falling both in and out of the home.

"The consequences of a fall can be devastating but by following these five easy tips we can make a real difference to older people's lives."

Lynne Douglas, Corporate Lead for Falls Prevention and Bone Health, NHS Lothian, said: "Preventing falls is vital in helping older people to live well and safely in their communities. This is an excellent initiative which is a result of collaboration between NHS Lothian services and City of Edinburgh Council and we hope that, most importantly, it will make a difference to the lives of older people in Edinburgh."

Leaflets and posters highlighting the campaign will be issued to surgeries, pharmacists, libraries, care homes and sheltered housing complexes in the coming weeks.

More information about 'Take Small Steps to Stay on your Feet' can be found at www.edinburgh.gov.uk/fiveeasysteps or www.nhsinform.co.uk/f

[alls](#). Alternatively, phone NHS Inform on 0800 22 44 88 (textphone 18001 0800 22 44 88).