



**Northern Ireland
Fire & Rescue Service**

Protecting Our Community

COMMUNITY INFORMATION BULLETIN NO. 31

Fall Prevention

Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service (NIFRS) is committed to Protecting our Community by delivering advice to the public in relation to health, safety and wellbeing. Falls are the number one reason older people are taken to the emergency department in a hospital. Most falls don't cause serious injury but they can leave you distressed.

There are ways you can reduce your risk of having a fall, including making simple changes to your home and doing exercises to improve your strength and balance. If you've fallen in the past, making changes to reduce your chances of having a fall can also help you overcome any fear of falling.

Avoiding falls at home

- Clean up spillages.
- Remove clutter, trailing wires and frayed carpets.
- Use non-slip mats, especially in the bathroom.
- Have good lighting around the home so you can see clearly.
- Organise your home so that climbing, stretching and bending is kept to a minimum.
- Wear slippers and shoes with a good grip.
- Be careful of loose-fitting or trailing clothes that may catch or trip you up and cause a fall.

Medication

- Ensure the side effects of your medication do not increase your chances of having a fall.
- Have a yearly review of your medications with your GP or Practice Nurse if you are taking four or more medicines a day.

Eyesight

- Eyesight deteriorates with age which can increase the chances of a fall.
- Make an appointment to have your eyes tested.

Alcohol

- Drinking alcohol can lead to loss of co-ordination and exaggerate the effects of some medicines, which can increase the risk of falls.
- Avoiding alcohol or reducing the amount you drink can reduce your risk of falling.

Strength and balance exercises



- Doing regular activity such as walking or dancing can improve your strength and balance which, in turn, can reduce your risk of having a fall.

Home safety visit

- Local Councils offer home safety visits to assess potential risks in the home. A Home Safety Officer, with experience in fall prevention, can identify hazards and advise on how to deal with them. Contact your local council to arrange a visit.

Useful contacts

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/falls/prevention/>

For further information phone NIFRS HQ 028 9266 4221 or visit www.nifrs.org   **#STOPfire**