



Guildford and Waverley

Falls Prevention Guide

This leaflet is for people who have had a fall, are fearful of falling or for anyone who would like some helpful falls prevention advice.

Falls and fall related injuries can lead to serious problems. If you are 65 or over, you may have a higher risk of falling. The effects of a fall on you could lead to distress, pain, injury, loss of confidence and independence.

A fall is a symptom not a diagnosis. Falling is not an inevitable part of ageing. Many falls are preventable. It is important for you to know what to do to reduce your risk of falling.

Ways to help prevent a fall



Vision

Poor vision can increase your risk of falling. If you are over 60, you are entitled to a free annual eye test. Contact your local optician to book an appointment.



Keep warm

Heat your home to at least 18°C (65°F) during the winter months. Wear plenty of layers when going out in cold weather.



Home hazards and falls

Over half of falls occur in the home. Think about your home environment. Some changes can be made to help minimise the risk of trips and falls.

- Leave lights on in your hallway at night for visits to the bathroom
- Ensure light switches are easily accessible and keep lights on when moving around your home
- Have a handrail installed outside if you feel you need extra support
- Install hand rails or a shower / bath seat if your shower is over your bath
- Use non-slip mats and rugs, check for curling corners
- Tuck electric wiring to the side and tape down
- Clear up spilled food or drink straight away
- Arrange cupboards so that frequently used items are easy to reach
- Check that bedspreads and long curtains don't trail over the floor



Hearing

Poor hearing can affect balance. You may benefit from a hearing test. The test is often free. Ask your GP, optician or larger pharmacy for information.



Blood pressure

Feeling dizzy or lightheaded when you stand up may be a sign that you have low blood pressure. See your GP if you have any concerns.

You can get help with many of these changes via the Borough Council Care and Repair Team on [01483 444 476](tel:0148344476).



Mobility aids

Make sure walking sticks and frames are the correct height. Check and replace the rubber ends (called 'ferrules') when they are worn out as they provide grip. Replacement ferrules can be bought from large pharmacies or you can ask your therapist.



Eat well

Eat regular meals full of essential vitamins and minerals to help keep your body fit and well.



Footwear and slippers

Make sure your shoes and slippers fit properly by getting your feet measured every time you buy new ones. Good footwear should have support around the heel and over the top of your foot. Lace-ups, velcro straps or T-bar straps are preferable.



Keep active

Regular exercise can help improve muscle strength, joint flexibility, balance and co-ordination. These can all help with everyday activities, including walking, bending down to put on shoes and getting in and out of a chair.



Keep hydrated

Dry skin and mouth, dizziness, constipation, tiredness and headaches can be early signs of dehydration. Drink at least 6 to 8 cups of fluid a day to stay hydrated. Eat foods with high water content e.g. melon, pineapple rings, jellies, yoghurt, ice lollies, soups.



Alcohol

Alcohol can make you dehydrated. It can also lead to a loss of co-ordination and exaggerate the effects of some medicines. Avoiding alcohol or reducing the amount you drink can reduce your risk of having a fall.

Services for Guildford and Waverley residents



Community Meals Service

Meals are cooked and delivered hot and ready to eat. For more information, please contact your local borough council.

 Guildford residents
01483 503 010

 Waverley residents
01483 523 333



Flu vaccinations

Get your seasonal flu jab. If you are aged 65 and over or if you have a long term health condition, you can have a flu jab, free of charge.

Contact your GP practice or pharmacy to book an appointment.



Let's Get Steady Free Falls Prevention Advice

Free 2.5hr sessions to help identify and reduce the risk of falls, giving advice on:

- strength and balance
- hydration, nutrition, medication
- safety within your home
- sensory issues and foot care
- the latest alarms and sensors

The sessions are ideal if you have had a recent fall, are vulnerable to falls due to a long term condition or are fearful of falling.

Speak to your GP or Practice Nurse for more information or speak to your borough council's Care and Repair Team on  01483 444 476.



Basic foot care services

You can access basic foot care advice and services such as toenail cutting. Contact Age UK Surrey for information.

 01483 446 627

 enquiries@ageuksurrey.org.uk



Medication reviews

Some medication can have side effects that may make you feel unsteady. If you are taking four or more medications, your risk of falling may be increased.

Ask your GP for a medication review every 12 months.



Laughter and New Friends

Social interaction is good for our brain health and can help if you are feeling lonely or isolated. Different ways to meet people in your community include:

- support services and networks
- befriending and counselling services
- social groups
- organisations to connect you with your local community to help you stay independent

Speak to your local Social Care Development Co-ordinator (SCDC) for more information.

 Guildford residents
01483 517 262

 Waverley residents
01483 518 990

Coping with a fall

If you can't get up, call for help by shouting or bang something against a wall. Consider having a mobile, cordless phone or care alarm that you can carry with you in your pocket. Find something to keep you warm and comfortable like a tablecloth or blanket. Call 999 for help.

If you can get up, and don't have pain, roll onto your side. Using your arms, push yourself onto your hands and knees. Crawl or bottom shuffle to a sturdy piece of furniture. Put your hands onto the piece of furniture and bend your stronger leg up. Use your arms to rise into standing position. Turn yourself gently, sit and rest.

Let your GP know you've had a fall. A lot of older people think a fall is part of ageing. It's not! There may be a reason for falling and your GP could help. If you don't wish to tell your GP, tell a relative or friend.



Careline Community Alarm

A pendant alarm is ideal if you fall frequently or live on your own. It will prevent you from lying on the floor for long periods after a fall. Careline is a 24-hour emergency call system, where you can simply press a button in an emergency and an alarm call will be sent to the alarm centre, which is staffed 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

For more details please call:

 Guildford residents
01483 502 334

 Waverley residents
01483 523 535



Handy Person Scheme

The Handy Person Scheme may be able to assist you with small works to your property, such as plumbing repairs, alterations, and installing key safes, grab rails or banister rails. The scheme helps those who are aged 60 or over, disabled or vulnerable. All grab rails are fitted free.

For further information, contact your borough council's Care and Repair Team:

 01483 444 476

Regaining confidence after a fall

Fear of falling over is very common after experiencing a fall. It can create worry and lead people to stop doing their normal activities and stay indoors.

If you restrict your activities it can lead to a loss of confidence and feelings of failure.

Stay active and make use of friends, family and other support, for example, a walking frame, that you have available.

Think about your progress and the times you have not fallen.



Safe and Well Home Visits

Free Safe and Well visits are carried out by Surrey Fire and Rescue officers and in some instances, volunteers. They combine home safety checks, reducing the risk of fire in your home and where appropriate, you will also be offered information to help you improve your wellbeing, allowing you to live safer and more independently.

For more information, please call:

 0800 085 0767



Age UK Surrey

Age UK Surrey is an independent local charity providing a range of services and activities across the whole of the county to help people aged 50+ make the most of their life.

For more information on services available, please contact Age UK Surrey:

 enquiries@ageuksurrey.org.uk

 01483 503414

 www.ageuk.org.uk/surrey

This document can be downloaded or printed via the
NHS Surrey Heartlands CCG website

 www.surreyheartlandscg.nhs.uk

To request printed copy via the post, please contact the Independence and
Prevention Team at NHS Surrey Heartlands Clinical Commissioning Group:

 01483 405 450

 gwccg.info@nhs.net

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