

Improving health together



www.northyorkshireandyork.nhs.uk/stayinghealthy

Public Health Factsheet

Welcome to this edition of Improving Health Together, which focuses on older people's health and wellbeing and falls prevention.

Older people's health and wellbeing is a significant area of interest for health improvement. By promoting healthy lifestyles, we can empower patients to self care and potentially reduce the need for GP and hospital visits.

Falling is a serious and frequent occurrence in people aged 65 and over. Each year, 35% of over 65s experience one or more falls. About 45% of people aged over 80 who live in the community fall each year—10-25% of such falls will sustain a serious injury.¹

The NHS Institute for Innovation and Improvement has published High Impact Actions for Nursing and Midwifery (Staying Safe Preventing Falls). This document gives examples of high quality and cost effective care www.institute.nhs.uk.

Falls Prevention and Older People's Health Care

Issue 21 — Sept/Oct 2010



Up to one in three over 65s (3.4m) suffer a fall each year, costing the NHS an estimated £4.6 million a day, or £1.7 billion per year.²

Facts and figures

- ◆ By 2020, 42% of the population of North Yorkshire and York is projected to be over 50+ years.³
- ◆ Falls are a major cause of disability and the leading cause of mortality resulting from injury in people aged 75+ in the UK.⁴
- ◆ Annually more than 400,000 older people in England attend A&E following an accident, with 14,000 dying as a result of osteoporotic hip fracture in the UK.⁵
- ◆ Fractured neck of femur is the most serious consequence of falls in older people with a mortality rate of 10% at one month after a fall, 20% at four months and 30% at one year.⁶
- ◆ One in three people in retirement live in fuel poverty. (Age UK)
- ◆ 41.7% of over 50 year olds and 71.1% of over 70 year olds have some kind of hearing loss. (Royal Institute for the Deaf)
- ◆ Only 17% of men and 13% of women aged 65-74 meet the international guidelines of half an hour's exercise of 'moderate intensity' on at least 5 days a week. For those aged 75+, this falls to 8% of men and 3% of women.⁷



FALLS ROADSHOW
Thursday 9 September 2010

St Monica's Hospital, Long Street, Easingwold
York, North Yorkshire, YO61 3JD

To book your FREE place send your name and address to qualityevents@nyypct.nhs.uk or call 01423 876436. Book early—limited places.

Falls Prevention

The aim of the Falls Prevention Service is to reduce the incidence of preventable falls, as well as raising awareness of potential risks that may lead to a fall.

- ◆ **Falls prevention** is a very cost effective intervention. There is clear evidence that comprehensive integrated falls prevention and management programmes reduce the incidence and severity of first falls.⁷
- ◆ **Proactive preventative management** of 'first fallers' reduces the likelihood of a subsequent and more serious fall occurring.⁷
- ◆ **Falls result in psychological problems**, e.g. a fear of falling and loss of confidence in being able to move about safely, loss of mobility leading to social isolation and depression, increase in dependency and disability, hypothermia, pressure-related injury and infection.⁵

Patients should be advised to:

◆ Check that their slippers/shoes fit properly.	◆ Have their sight and ears checked each year.
◆ Ask their doctor to review their medication.	◆ Use non slip mats inside the bath or shower.
◆ Keep the home clutter free.	◆ Make sure the home is well lit.
◆ Check the rubber ferrule on the bottom of their walking stick for wear.	◆ Make sure they keep themselves and the home warm.
◆ Remove loose rugs/mats in the home.	

Remember to advise the patient that if they fall they should always consult their doctor.

There are lots of causes of falls which can be easily remedied.

The Falls Prevention Service can be accessed via: GP, Practice/District Nurse, Voluntary Organisations: e.g. Age Concern, Podiatrist, Warden, Social Worker or Care Manager. Or telephone the local Falls Prevention Service.


Falls Prevention Service

Selby and York	◆ <i>Central and East Virtual Wards</i>	01904 724451 or 01904 724362
<i>Clementhorpe Health Centre Cherry Street York YO23 1AP</i>	◆ <i>South Virtual Ward</i>	01904 724466
	◆ <i>North Virtual Ward</i>	01904 724468
	◆ <i>West Virtual Ward</i>	01904 724362
Hambleton and Richmondshire	◆ <i>Richmondshire</i>	01677 425111
	◆ <i>Hambleton</i>	01609 781124
	◆ <i>Leyburn Medical Centre</i>	01969 622125
Craven, Harrogate and Rural Area	◆ <i>Harrogate Area</i>	01423 812840
	◆ <i>Ripon Area</i>	01765 643551
	◆ <i>Knaresborough and Rural</i>	01423 544062
	◆ <i>Craven North</i>	01729 822205
	◆ <i>Craven South</i>	07917 265492

Referral Guidelines

Patients aged 65+ (if a patient is under the age of 65 years but would benefit from a falls assessment please contact the Falls Prevention Service to discuss)	Have either had a fall or found to be at high risk of falling using the FRAT (Falls Risk Assessment Tool).
Must be registered with a GP within the locality of NHS North Yorkshire and York.	Patients need to have agreed to and consented to the referral.

How to make a referral: All referrals need to include a copy of:

- 1 FRAT tool with results (FRAT attached—select  to view or contact the local team)
- 2 Relevant medical and social history.

This could be a GP system print out, letter or service referral form or self referral by telephone.

Physical Activity

Physical activity – particularly training to improve strength, balance and coordination – has been found to be highly effective in reducing the incidence of falls. Adults should achieve a total of at least 30 minutes of at least moderate intensity physical activity a day, on 5 or more days a week. Older people should take particular care to keep moving and retain their mobility through daily activity.

Choice of activities should be made in the light of an older person's functional limitations and symptoms of diseases.

Regular walking remains extremely important for the maintenance of independence.

The Physical Activity section of our website gives contact details for Extend/Postural Stability classes:

www.northyorkshireandYork.nhs.uk/StayingHealthy/PhysicalActivity

Podiatry

The average person walks the equivalent of five times around the earth in their lifetime. As such, it is not surprising that 75% of adults have some form of foot problem.

The first step in reducing foot pain and increasing mobility is appropriate footwear. For comfort, stability and long-term health a well fitting shoe with lace or Velcro fastening and a shock absorbing sole will make all the difference to an individual being able to walk pain free.

While foot health is important to all, for individuals with specific medical conditions such as Diabetes or Rheumatoid Arthritis there are specific risks and there is relevant NICE guidance for these conditions.⁸ If there are specific foot and lower limb problems, treatment can be sought from a Podiatrist either on the NHS or privately. Further information on NHS services and the referral leaflet can be found in the Older People's Health and Falls section of our website:

www.northyorkshireandYork.nhs.uk/StayingHealthy/

Dental Health

Information on dental health, oral cancer and how to register with an NHS dentist is available on the Staying Healthy section of our website and Improving Health Together Factsheet Issue 12—Oral Health.

www.northyorkshireandYork.nhs.uk/StayingHealthy/OralHealth/

Fuel Poverty—Hotspots

The cold negatively impacts on many health conditions and the risk of falling is increased as a result of a decrease in dexterity. The cold is said to be the underlying cause of 80% of excess winter deaths. Evidence has shown that experiencing cold within the home can be linked to more regular use of health services, and also an increased length of stay in hospital.

The Hotspots scheme enables frontline staff across North Yorkshire and York to refer patients, who may be at risk of poor health (physical and mental) as a result of living in a cold environment, for practical support. It involves completion of a simple referral card that offers clients access to benefits checks, a home fire safety check, energy efficiency advice and assessment for home improvements, e.g. insulation.

For additional details about the Hotspots scheme, including how to obtain referral

cards, please contact Rachael Kumar at rachael.kumar@nyypct.nhs.uk.



Hearing/Ear Care

Age-related hearing loss (presbycusis) is due to wear and tear of both cochlea. We cannot repair our cochlea so damage manifests as a symmetrical (the same in both ears), sensorineural hearing loss sometime accompanied with bilateral tinnitus. Audiology services for the elderly are not restricted to hearing and hearing aids. Many audiology services offer practical advice on how to deal with tinnitus and also will be involved in determining how well the balance organs are working for people who experience balance problems.

Please see the Falls Prevention and Older People's Health section on www.northyorkshireandYork.nhs.uk/StayingHealthy for further information, including ear wax and how to refer to Audiology.

Eye Health

Even if a patient's eyesight appears fine they may have a condition that could threaten their vision. Any changes in vision or concerns about eyes, should be checked out by an optician/optometrist as soon as possible. NHS Choices lists all local opticians www.nhs.uk/. See our website for additional advice on eye health www.northyorkshireandYork.nhs.uk/StayingHealthy/.

References/Policy Context

- 1 Falls and Fractures—Effective Interventions in Health and Social Care. Department of Health, 2009. www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_103146
- 2 Older People's Experiences of Falls and Bone Health Services (England), Royal College of Physicians, 2008.
- 3 ONS 2006 based sub-national population projections
- 4 Scuffham and Chaplin, 2002.
- 5 National Service Framework for Older People, Department of Health 2001.
- 6 Delivering Quality and Value Focus on Fractures Neck of Femur, Institute of Innovation and Improvement, 2006.
- 7 [Delivering Healthy Ambitions: Better for Less](#). NHS Yorkshire and the Humber, 2010.
- 8 CG15 Type 1 Diabetes in Children, Young People and Adults, NICE 2004
CG10 Type 2 Diabetes Prevention and Management of Foot Problems, NICE 2004
CG79 The Management of Rheumatoid Arthritis in Adults, NICE 2009. www.nice.org.uk

Clinical practice guideline for the assessment and prevention of falls in older people CG21. NICE, 2004 <http://guidance.nice.org.uk/CG21>

Protecting fragile bones: A strategy to reduce the impact of osteoporosis and fragility fractures in England. National osteoporosis Society, May 2009.

www.nos.org.uk/NetCommunity/Document.Doc?id=490

Guidelines for the promotion of physical activity with older people. British Heart Foundation, 2008.

www.bhfactive.org.uk/downloads/Older_Adults_PA_Guide_lines.pdf

Resources

Age UK

Tel: 0800 169 6565

A range of leaflets including Better Hearing, Better Sight, Fitter Feet and Healthier Bones.

Preventing Falls, Strength and Balance Exercises for healthy ageing is free to download.

www.ageuk.org.uk/Documents/EN-GB/ID8950%20Strength%20And%20Balance%20Book.pdf?dtrk=true

National Osteoporosis Society


Tel: 0845 130 3076

www.nos.org.uk

Leaflets on Healthy Bones, Facts about Food, Hip Protectors and Osteoporosis.

NHS North Yorkshire and York

www.northyorkshireandyork.nhs.uk/StayingHealthy

Downloadable Steps to Prevent Falls leaflets (Selby and York, Hambleton, Richmondshire, Leyburn, Harrogate and Rural) and Podiatry NHS Services and Referral leaflet. (Also attached to this document—select  to view.)

Websites

NHS Institute for Innovation and Improvement

www.institute.nhs.uk/

Staying safe, preventing falls. High impact actions with examples of high quality and cost effective care.



Age UK

www.ageuk.org.uk

Aim to improve later life for everyone through information and advice, campaigns (including National Falls Awareness Week), products, training and research.



NHS Choices—Stay Well Over 50

www.nhs.uk/livewell/staywellover50/pages/staywell.aspx

Advice and information on how to stay fit and well over 50.



British Heart Foundation

www.bhfactive.org.uk

Information on the benefits of physical activity for older adults.



Feet for Life

www.feetforlife.org

Website of Society of Chiropractors and Podiatrists. Information on foot health and how to find a podiatrist.



RNIB

www.rnib.org.uk

Supporting blind and partially sighted people.



RNID

www.rnid.org.uk

Help people identify whether they have a hearing loss, campaign for change, provide services and training, and actively support scientific and technological research.



DirectGov—Keep Warm Keep Well

<http://keepwarmkeepwell.direct.gov.uk/index.html>

National Campaign to reduce cold related illness and deaths during winter. Information and advice about how to stay well in winter by keeping warm and what financial support is available.



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