



ADVICE

## Falls Prevention Tips Number Six

# A guide to reducing the risk of falls due to medication

- Medications include all those prescribed by your doctor AND bought over the counter
- The more different medicines you take, the higher your risk of falling.
- Always take your prescribed medicine as instructed on the label
- Do not change or stop any medication without talking to your doctor

## Keep track of your medicines

- ▶ Keep an up to date list of all the medicines you are taking and always carry it with you in your wallet or purse
- ▶ Keep your medicines in the packaging labelled by the pharmacist. Ask your pharmacist for help if you cannot manage to remove them from the containers.

## Review your medicines

- ▶ **Important** - have a medication check with your doctor at least once a year to ensure they are still having the desired effect on your health
- ▶ Check your review date with your GP surgery
- ▶ If you are prescribed a new medicine, check if it is to replace an old one.
- ▶ Your regular pharmacist can carry out a Medicines Use Review with you to help you understand what your medication is for
- ▶ If you have an urgent problem with your medicines, contact your doctor or pharmacist to discuss.

## Know your medicines

- ▶ Check the best time of day to take new medicines
- ▶ Some medicines, especially if taken together, can make you feel drowsy, light-headed, faint or unsteady. This may only happen when you first start to take them and may not last for long.
- ▶ Some medicines may make you feel confused
- ▶ Some medicines may lead to changes in your vision making it harder to clearly see your surroundings
- ▶ Drinking alcohol with some medications can increase your risk of falls
- ▶ If you do not recognise your medicine, check it out with the pharmacist.

## Types of medicines that can cause falls

Please note – this is only a guide as medicines taken together may also cause problems that may not be included in this list

Medicines for:	Problems	How to reduce the risk of falls
Blood pressure	Dizziness when getting up from sitting or lying.	Get up slowly. Check best time to take medicine.
Heart tablets	Dizziness and / or weakness when getting up from sitting or lying.	<b>Medicines Review may be required</b>
Water tablets	Weakness in leg muscles. Dizziness. Urgency to go to toilet.	Check best time to take medicine. <b>Medicines Review may be required</b>
Urine incontinence	Blurred vision, drowsiness and confusion.	Check best time to take medicine. <b>Medicines Review may be required</b>
Constipation	Weakness in leg muscles. Dizziness. Urgency to go to toilet.	Check best time to take medicine. Check the need for long term use.
Depression, Anxiety, Sleep problems	May cause drowsiness or confusion and slowing of reactions.	Be careful purchasing medicines. Check best time to take medicine.
Emotional problems	Dizziness when getting up from sitting or lying. Drowsiness or confusion and slowing of reactions.	<b>Medicines Review may be required</b>
Parkinson's Disease	Drowsiness and confusion.	<b>Medicines Review may be required</b>
Pain	Strong pain killers may cause drowsiness and confusion.	Be careful purchasing medicines. <b>Medicines Review may be required</b>

Medicines for:	Problems	How to reduce the risk of falls
Blood sugar control	If blood sugar is too low you will become confused, weak and light-headed.	Check how you are taking your medicine. <b>Medicines Review may be required</b>
Allergies/cold remedies	May cause drowsiness.	Be careful purchasing medicines. Use short term if possible.

## Further information

For more information about how to avoid a fall, go to: [www.ageuk.org.uk](http://www.ageuk.org.uk) and search Staying Steady.

If you have any concerns or need advice about accessing NHS services, you can enquire in confidence on 01525 864405 or [enquiries@bedfordshireccg.nhs.uk](mailto:enquiries@bedfordshireccg.nhs.uk).

Leaflets available in this series:

1. A guide to what to do if you have a fall
2. A guide to safe footwear
3. A guide to safe transfers on/off chairs and bed
4. A guide to the safe use of walking aids
5. A guide to the safe use of wheelchairs
6. A guide to reducing the risk of falls due to medication
7. A guide to diet and nutrition
8. A guide to keeping warm

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