



ADVICE

Falls Prevention Tips Number Eight

A guide to keeping warm

- There are a number of ways you can keep warm in the home. Being cold can:
 - Affect mobility and increase the risk of falls
 - Increase the risk of other accidents and serious injuries which can result in periods of prolonged immobility
 - Increase the risk of illness

How to keep warm and reduce the risk of falls.

Prepare for winter

- ▶ Check whether you can claim financial support to help with heating bills; you could ask your local Citizens Advice Bureau (www.citizensadvice.org.uk) or Age UK Bedfordshire (www.ageuk.org.uk/bedfordshire) 01234 360 510.
- ▶ Make sure that you have some warm slippers and shoes that fasten and stay on properly, and that they aren't loose or worn out as this may cause you to trip.
- ▶ Keep a mixture of salt and sand to put on steps and paths in icy weather - do not pour hot water on steps and paths
- ▶ Allow extra time if it's slippery outside as you are more likely to fall if you hurry
- ▶ Make sure the rubber tip at the end of your walking stick isn't worn

Keep the heat in your home

- ▶ Insulating your home helps to keep the heat where you want it, and ensures your money goes as far as possible. Contact your local Council or the Energy Saving Trust (www.energysavingtrust.org.uk) on 0300 123 1234 to find out more about insulation schemes.
- ▶ Ensure your heating is set for the right time and temperature. Try to keep the temperature of your living room at the recommended temperature of 70°F/ 21°C and the rest of the house heated to at least 64°F /18°C.
- ▶ Close the curtains at dusk and fit thermal linings if you can
- ▶ Shut doors to keep rooms warm

For further information visit www.bedford.gov.uk/keeping-warm / call 01234 267422 or www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/warmhomes / call 0300 300 8300

Keep well

- ▶ Have a seasonal flu jab
- ▶ Keep moving – avoid sitting down for long periods as muscles become stiff and slow when they are cold
- ▶ Try to move every 15-20 minutes. Even housework will generate body heat and help to keep you warm.
- ▶ Eat well – food is a vital source of energy so try to ensure you have hot meals and drink regularly. Plan your meals ahead, stock up on tinned and frozen meals so that you don't have to go shopping in very cold weather.
- ▶ Keep warm – put on several warm, light layers of clothing which will keep you warmer than one thick layer.
 - ▷ Have hot drinks, use a hot water bottle and if you're sitting down, put a blanket over you. Never use an electric blanket and a hot water bottle together.
 - ▷ Try to keep your feet up as the air is cooler at ground level
 - ▷ When it's very cold, wear thermal underwear, bed socks and even a hat to bed, as a lot of heat is lost through your head.
 - ▷ Wrap up on very cold days. Try to avoid staying outdoors and always wear gloves, a hat and a scarf.
 - ▷ Choose boots/shoes with non-slip soles, particularly when the ground is slippery.
- ▶ Make sure you stay in touch with friends and family by speaking on the phone.

Further information

For more information about how to avoid a fall, go to: 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.

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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