

Safety tips!

There are many causes of falls and not all falls happen at home. Steps you can take to prevent a fall include:

Regular exercise – Regular physical activity is important for staying healthy and independent. In addition, exercise that focuses on improving balance (like Tai Chi) can help reduce falls. For help finding activities in your local area, call **NSW Sport and Recreation** on Tel. **13 13 02** or visit http://www.dsr.nsw.gov.au/active/tips_older.asp

Regular medical checkups – if you are aged 75 years and over you are eligible for your local GP to conduct an in-depth assessment of your health under the *Enhanced Primary Care* initiative. Further information: <http://health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/health-epc-hlthassmnt.htm> or talk to your GP.

Healthy diet – maintain your calcium intake by including dairy products, such as milk, cheese and yoghurt. Enjoy high fibre foods, such as breads and cereals (preferably wholegrain), vegetables, fruits, pasta and rice. Further information: <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/health-pubhlth-strateg-food-resources.htm> or talk to your GP.

Regular eye checks – poor vision can increase your risk of falling. Have your eyes checked regularly – at least once a year.

Well managed medications – review your medications with your local GP or pharmacist and ask about side effects of the medication.

Fact sheets about the causes of falls including tips to reduce your risk of falling can be found on the NSW Department of Health website at www.health.nsw.gov.au

Other safety tips:

- **Keep emergency telephone numbers near your telephone. Place your telephone in a low position, so it can be reached from the floor.**
- **Think about wearing an alarm device that will bring help in case you fall and cannot get up.**

For more information!

For more information on ways to make your home safer or to find out about your nearest Home Maintenance and Modification Service, call your local Aged Care Assessment Team or the Occupational Therapy Department at your local hospital.

Other useful contacts include:

Aged Care Assessment Teams – assess older people for care needs and support at home, or residential care in nursing homes and hostels.
Tel. 1800 052 222

Aged Care Information line – offers information on hostels, nursing homes and community care packages. **Tel. 1800 500 853**

Department of Veterans Affairs – offers assistance with home maintenance and modifications for veterans. **Tel. 133 254**

Disability Information Services – offers information and referral services for people with disabilities. **Tel. 1800 177 120**

Home and Community Care – provides help with home nursing, household tasks, personal care, respite care, housekeeping, home maintenance and modification and delivered food services.
Tel. 1800 052 222

Independent Living Centre of NSW – provides free information and advice on equipment to assist with daily living activities.
Tel. 1300 885 886 or **www.ilcnsw.asn.au**

Seniors Information Service – offers information about and referral to services, groups and activities for older people in NSW. **Tel. 13 12 44**

Telstra – offers services for people with hearing and speech difficulties.
Tel. 1800 068 424

If you need an interpreter to contact any services, contact the Translating and Interpreting Service. Tel. 131 450

What to do if you fall at home

If you do fall, don't panic. **STAY CALM.**

Make a decision whether or not to get up.

If you decide to try and get up

Take time to recover.

Use stable furniture to help you back to your feet.

Tell someone you have had a fall.

Seek medical advice, if necessary.

If you decide you can't get up

Try sliding or crawling to seek help.

Try to reach your:

- front door
- telephone
- personal alarm

Make a loud noise to attract attention.

Try and make yourself comfortable while on the floor.

Try and keep warm while on the floor.

Once you have attracted attention, lie quietly until help arrives.

Seek medical advice.

