

8 Myths about Falls

Heneiddio'n Dda
yng Nghymru

Ageing Well
in Wales



Ensuring Wales is a good place to grow older for everyone

Myth #1: Falls are just part of growing older

Falling is not a normal part of ageing. There are plenty of things you can do to reduce your risk of falling:

- Make sure you get regular eye tests
- Be aware of what medication you're taking, and any side-effects
- Keep active - maintain your strength and balance
- Ensure you stay hydrated, eat well, and be aware of the effects of alcohol
- Be aware of trip hazards

Myth #2: Falls cannot be prevented

Most falls can be prevented, and you have the power to reduce your risk. Small changes to your physical activity can make a big difference. Exercise can help to restore strength and flexibility. **It's never too late to become more active.**

Myth #3: Talking about falling puts my independence at risk

It's important to share any concerns you have about falling with a health professional, friends, family and anyone who is in a position to help. **It's especially important to talk to someone if you have fallen, even if you haven't hurt yourself seriously.**

There are many services to help you stay independent and living well in your own home, including

- Help to spot and remove hazards in your home
- Make home improvements to reduce your risk of falling
- Direct you to suitable exercise programmes
- Help check your general health and evaluate your medication.

Organisations running these services want to help you keep mobile and independent.

Myth #4: My eyesight hasn't changed, I don't need an eye test

Ageing is associated with some forms of vision loss that can increase the risk of falling. **Even if you think your eyesight is fine, have your eyesight tested regularly and make sure the glasses you wear are up-to-date.**

Myth #5: I'm too young to fall

Bones and muscles begin to be affected by ageing in your 30s. **Strength and balance exercises and eating properly can reduce this loss.**

Myth #6: If I limit my activity, I won't fall

Some people believe that the best way to prevent falls is to limit your activity. This isn't the case. **Keeping physically active will actually help you stay independent and lead the sort of life you want to.** Even light activities such as gardening or walking the dog can help you reduce your risk of falling.

Myth #7: If I stay at home, I won't fall over

Over half of all falls occur in the home. **Be aware of falls risks in your own home:**

- Clutter
- Trailing cables
- Loose rugs
- Bathroom lights
- Poor lighting
- Ill-fitting and loose shoes or slippers

Make simple modifications such as changing light fittings, adding grab bars in the bathroom, a second handrail on stairs, and non-slip paint on outdoor steps.

Myth #8: My feet and toenails have nothing to do with falling

Caring for your feet, keeping skin healthy and toenails trimmed can affect your balance and make you feel more comfortable when you're on your feet. If you are experiencing difficulty caring for your feet there are a number of services available to help you.

For more information, visit www.ageingwellinwales.com/falls

This leaflet was produced by Ageing Well in Wales in conjunction with partners 1,000 Lives Plus, Aberystwyth University, Age Cymru, Care & Repair, Cardiff & Vale UHB, CSP (Chartered Society of Physiotherapy), Hywel Dda LHB, NERS (National Exercise Referral Scheme), Newport City Council, Public Health Wales, RNIB (Royal National Institute of Blind People), and Welsh Government.

Ageing Well in Wales is a national programme hosted by the Older People's Commissioner for Wales. It brings together individuals and communities with public, private and voluntary sectors to develop and promote innovative and practical ways to make Wales a good place to grow older for everyone.