



GET FIT AVOID FALLS PROTOCOL

A Community based inter-agency approach to falls prevention

INTRODUCTION

The Get Fit Avoid Falls project is an interagency programme including Chiltern District Council, Wycombe Primary Care Trust, Chiltern Leisure Trust and Chiltern Hundreds Housing Association.

The Department of Trade and Industry has specially funded the programme to help prevent falls and injury.

BACKGROUND

Around a quarter of a million people over the age of 75 seek medical treatment in Accident and Emergency Departments every year as a result of a fall at home.

1 in 5 results in a fracture requiring hospital treatment.

The risk of falling does increase as we get older and some medical conditions may lead to an increased risk but we can reduce or even prevent the situation by getting fit and taking precautions e.g. fitting grab rails, improving balance and muscular strength etc.

Presently we only have funding for this year and therefore there will only be one or two programmes in the local Chiltern area.

TARGET GROUP

The programmes caters for people over the age of 60 years who have fallen or at risk of falling, because of poor mobility and or strength, lack of confidence and have balance problems.

These have been identified through the Accident and Emergency Falls Service at Wycombe Hospital and Older People who have fallen or at risk of falling that have been identified by Chiltern Hundreds Housing Association in their sheltered housing schemes.

The group setting caters for a maximum of 20 participants attending each programme. Groups larger than 20 would not be safe or effective

PROGRAMME AIMS

The aim of the project is to bring a falls prevention programme to the local community and help those people at risk of falling, by improving quality of life by reducing the fear of falling, increasing activity levels and reducing isolation.

We have developed an 8-week programme with exercises to improve balance, strength and mobility, followed by educational workshops. Aiming to increase knowledge of falls prevention including how to recover from a fall, home safety and community services.

There are also free refreshments and if help is required attending the venue, free return transport can be organised with Dial a Ride.

LOCATIONS/LENGTH OF PROGRAMMES

Chiltern District Council have decided on the following rural locations for the programme:

Chalfont St Peter
Amersham
Great Missenden
Chesham
Little Chalfont
Prestwood

The programmes will run for 8 weeks, with one 2-hour session a week.

WHAT WILL THE TEAM/SERVICE PROVIDE

There will be no charge to participants attending the programme and they will receive free benefits such as hip protectors, grab rails, pendant alarms and home security devices.

- Pre-programme letter to participants GP
- Explain the programme to each participant e.g. what to expect from the programme, what to wear to each class
- Pre health screen and functional assessment for each participant
- Blood pressure readings are taken in the sitting and standing position to check for a postural drop.
- A Programme booklet will be provided to each participant
- A home based exercise programme will be provided to each participant
- Provision of hip protectors to those who meet the criteria and instructions for patients
- Over a period of 6 weeks, exercise sessions will be carried out to improve static and dynamic balance, strength, mobility and confidence within a group setting.
- Tai chi at the end of each exercise session
- Falls prevention educational sessions over the period of six weeks, including group activities, demonstrations, quizzes and handout
- Backward chaining (getting up from the floor, useful techniques are demonstrated)
- Training in how to cope with "a long lie" (frequent consequence of a fall)
- Environmental assessment if required
- Provision of appropriate equipment and environmental adaptation e.g. walking aids, grab rails, chair/bed raises and pendent alarms. Equipment will be provided if appropriate to ensure safety. It will be assessed for and provided by a member of the falls team.
- Post-programme functional assessment
- Discharge letter to patients GP, referrer and other appropriate services

PRE-PROGRAMME

On the first session we will complete a health questionnaire and participants will be issued with free hip protectors. The exercise programme will start the following week. Participants will be requested to wear appropriate footwear, clothing and their hip protectors.

ASSESSMENT TOOLS

The assessment and recording tools used are:

- Register
- Patient evaluation form (recording patient's name, personal details, medical history, and medication, blood pressure (postural drop), weight, predisposing factors and history of falls and out come measures.
- Out come measures include: CONF/BAL Questionnaire, Timed Up and Go, 180° Turn and feed back questionnaire.

EXERCISE SESSIONS

Each session caters for a diverse range, by ensuring that as appropriate for the individual there is a seated and standing option for all exercises.

Each session also provides gentle graded progressions of each exercise for different functional levels. Aiming to improve balance and co-ordination, increase functional capacity, increase bone and muscle mass and to increase confidence.

All sessions begin with a warm up to loosen joints, warm and stretch muscles, rehearse skills and gradually increase the demand on the heart and lungs.

Starting with chair based exercises using therabands, beanbags, balls etc, progressing to standing static and dynamic balance routines as well as balance and strengthening circuits

The cool down consists of slow rhythmic exercise, reducing joint stiffness, ending with 15 minutes of Tai Chi.

The group is seated on straight-backed sturdy chairs (preferably without armrests) in a circle. The instructor demonstrates and explains each exercise, observes and gives feed back to the patients.

EDUCATIONAL WORKSHOPS

After each exercise session the team will present an educational workshop for all participants.

Handouts and quizzes offered to participants produced by the falls team include:

- The Benefits of Exercise - Handout
- A checklist for a safer home - Handout
- How to cope with a fall - Handout
- Falls quiz

Community services: Information leaflets offered to patients include:

- Safehip “The Hip Protector” – Robinson Care
- Feel Good Keep Moving – Buckinghamshire NHS
- Avoiding Slips, trips and broken hips. How to avoid falls in the home – information for older people – DTI
- FALLS How to avoid them and how to cope – Age Concern
- Safety In Your Home – Help the Aged
- So you think you’re safe at home? - DTI
- Step up to safety – DTI
- Handy Van Scheme High Wycombe – Help the Aged
- Keysafe
- Calcium Rich Foods and Bone Health – National Osteoporosis Society
- Eat Well Keep Well ‘5’ a day – Better Homes – Better Health
- Wiltshire Farm Foods the home meals service

- Dial-a-Shopper Home Delivered Meals with Shopping Service
- Cosyfeet
- Amersham Dial-A-Ride
- Community Careline services
- Independent Living

FOLLOW ON/DISCHARGE

- Outcome summary of intervention will be sent to the GP
- If patient does not complete the full eight week programme a summary letter will be sent to GP

EVALUATION

- On completion of each programme intervention and post discharge assessment, an evaluation form will be completed for data input, and a report presented
- Feed back from patients using satisfaction questionnaire
- Meetings will be held by the Get Fit Avoid Falls team to discuss the current service and development needs

PROGRAMME PLAN

<p>Week 1</p> <p>Introduction Health Questionnaire & Blood Pressure Fitting of Hip Protectors and talk Pre programme assessments Talk about free pendant alarms and grab rails</p>	<p>Week 5</p> <p>Aerobic Exercise Strengthening and Balance Exercise Tai Chi Talk – How to recover from a Fall</p>
<p>Week 2</p> <p>Aerobic Exercise Strengthening Exercises (Theraband) Tai chi Talk – Benefits of Exercise</p>	<p>Week 6</p> <p>Aerobic Exercise Strengthening and Balance Exercises Tai Chi Talk – Foot Care</p>
<p>Week 3</p> <p>Aerobic Exercise Strengthening and Balance Exercises Tai Chi Talk – Home Safety Advice</p>	<p>Week 7</p> <p>Aerobic Exercise Strengthening and Balance Exercises Tai Chi Talk – Community Services</p>
<p>Week 4</p> <p>Aerobic Exercise Strengthening and Balance Exercises Tai Chi Talk – Healthy Eating</p>	<p>Week 8</p> <p>Post Programme assessments Completion of Questionnaire</p>

STANDARDS OF PRACTICE

HEALTH AND SAFETY AWARENESS

- Clean, clear well lit area
- Location of first aid equipment
- First aider or medical personnel
- Location of nearest phones
- Location of nearest toilets
- Location of Emergency call buttons
- Location of fire exits and meeting points
- Availability of fresh drinking water

STAFF

- Two-three, staff members are required per session to carry out/supervise the programme.
- The coordinator or rehabilitation technician are to conduct the exercise session, and to either present or supervise the educational sessions
- Health professionals present a number of the educational sessions from Amersham and Wycombe General Hospital, these include staff from the Dietetics department and Podiatry department.

GET FIT AVOID FALLS TEAM

Staff:

Mikki Cogan	- Project Lead –Health Promotion Officer Chiltern District Council
Kate Cox	- Chair NSF County sub Group For Falls and Fracture Prevention District Physiotherapist
Lucie Posnett	- Project Co-ordinator (Falls therapy assistant Wycombe PCT)
Gill Morgan	- Physiotherapy Head of Falls Prevention and Management Programme for the community. Clinical lead for Older People Wycombe PCT
Ann Thompson	- Chiltern Leisure Trust
Lyn Williams	- Tai Chi Instructor