



Keeping your balance: reduce your risk of falls

Answer six simple questions and find out how you can reduce your risk of falling.

This leaflet is for you if you:

- **are worried about falling**
- **have had a near miss**
- **have fallen before**



Am I at risk of falls?

1. Are you taking four or more medicines?



If you haven't seen your GP in the last year **please make an appointment** to see them.

2. In the past year, have you experienced:

- Blackouts
- Dizziness
- Fainting
- Waking up to find yourself on the floor?



If you haven't discussed this with your GP **please make an appointment** to see them.

3. Have you had an eye test in the last two years?

If you are over 60 you are entitled to a **FREE NHS eye test** every two years. If you are unable to get to an opticians you may be able to have your eyes tested at home.



If you answered 'no' **please make an appointment with an optician.**

Visit www.nhs.uk to find out if you are eligible for a free eye test.

4. Have you fallen in the last year?

5. Do you have problems with your strength and balance when walking?

6. Do you have a fear of falling?



If you answered yes to any of these **please call Health and Social Care Connect** on **0345 60 80 191.**

The adviser will direct you to services that can help to reduce your risk of falling.

Exercise

- Staying active is key to staying steady on our feet. Using the stairs, rising from a chair, walking, gardening and Tai Chi are great examples.
- You can also keep your bones strong by eating a healthy, balanced diet that is rich in calcium. For more information about healthy lifestyles visit: www.eastsussex.gov.uk/wellbeing

“150 minutes of moderate exercise a week and activities to improve muscle strength, balance and co-ordination can reduce the risk of falling.”



Alcohol

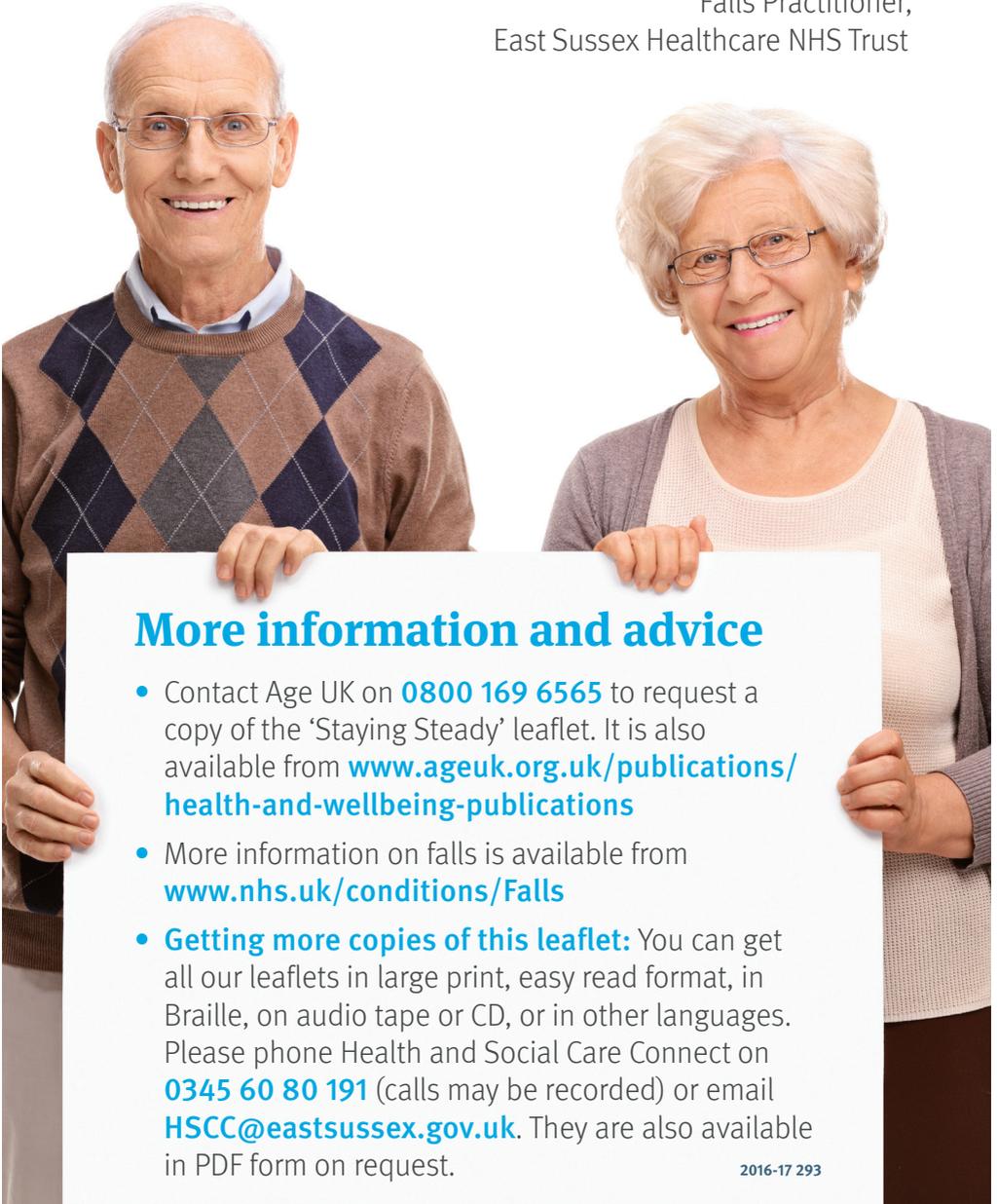
- As we get older we become more sensitive to the effects of alcohol, reacting more slowly and losing our balance. Reducing the amount you drink can reduce your risk of falling. Alcohol can also alter the effects of some medicines. Ask your doctor whether it is safe for you to drink with your health problems or medication.
- If you have any concerns relating to alcohol you can contact your local drug and alcohol service STAR on 0300 3038 160, or find out more online: www.changegrowlive.org/what-we-do/drug-and-alcohol-services

“To reduce the health risks from drinking alcohol it is safest to drink less than 14 units a week. It is best to spread units evenly across the week.”

Drink Aware has further information about alcohol units at: www.drinkaware.co.uk/alcohol-facts

“The risk of falling increases as we age. Staying active and doing small exercises to improve strength and balance will not only improve health and wellbeing but will reduce the chance of long term health conditions and fragility; helping you to stay independent for longer.”

Brenda Bigsby
Falls Practitioner,
East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust



More information and advice

- Contact Age UK on **0800 169 6565** to request a copy of the ‘Staying Steady’ leaflet. It is also available from www.ageuk.org.uk/publications/health-and-wellbeing-publications
- More information on falls is available from www.nhs.uk/conditions/Falls
- **Getting more copies of this leaflet:** You can get all our leaflets in large print, easy read format, in Braille, on audio tape or CD, or in other languages. Please phone Health and Social Care Connect on **0345 60 80 191** (calls may be recorded) or email HSCC@eastsussex.gov.uk. They are also available in PDF form on request.