

# A Guide to Reducing the Risk of Falls due to Medication in Older People

Certain medicines can sometimes cause dizziness or drowsiness and, along with other factors, contribute to the risk of falling over. It is important that these medicines are regularly reviewed to minimise the risk of harm.

## Keep Track of Your Medicines

- ⇒ Keep an **up to date** list of all the medicines you are taking (including those prescribed AND bought over the counter) and carry it with you in your wallet or purse.
- ⇒ Keep your medicines in the packaging labelled by the pharmacist.
- ⇒ Ask your pharmacist for help if you cannot manage to remove them from the containers.

## Review Your Medicines

- ⇒ Certain medicines can sometimes cause dizziness or drowsiness and contribute to the risk of falling, especially if taken together.
- ⇒ Have a medication review with a healthcare professional (e.g. pharmacist, nurse or GP) at least once a year to ensure they are still having the desired effect on your health. Check your review date with your GP surgery.
- ⇒ Your pharmacist can give advice and explain your medication.
- ⇒ If you have an urgent problem with your medicines, contact your pharmacist or doctor to discuss.

## Key Points to Reduce Risk of Falls

- ⇒ Check the best time of day to take new medicines.
- ⇒ Some medicines, especially if taken together, can make you feel drowsy, light-headed, faint or unsteady on your feet. This may happen when you first start to take them and may not last for long.
- ⇒ Some medicines may make you feel confused or lead to changes in your vision making it harder to clearly see your surroundings.
- ⇒ Alcohol with some medications can also increase your risk of falls.
- ⇒ If you do not recognise your medicine, check with your pharmacist.
- ⇒ Always take your prescribed medicine as instructed on the label.
- ⇒ Do not change or stop any medication without talking to your doctor.

# Types of Medicines and Associated Risk of Falls in Older People

**Please note – this is just a guide and there may be other medicines not included in this list which also may increase the risk of falling.**

For more falls prevention information see: <http://www.ageuk.org.uk> and search “Staying Steady”

<b>Medicines for:</b>	<b>Possible problems which may increase risk of falling:</b>
<b>Blood pressure</b>	Drowsiness and/or dizziness when getting up from sitting or lying. Always take your time standing up from a sitting or lying position.
<b>Heart tablets</b>	Dizziness when getting up from sitting or lying. Always take your time standing up from a sitting or lying position.
<b>Water tablets</b>	Dizziness or urgency to go to toilet.
<b>Urine incontinence</b>	May cause blurred vision, drowsiness or confusion.
<b>Depression, anxiety, sleep problems</b>	May cause drowsiness, confusion or slowing of reactions.
<b>Other mental health conditions</b>	Drowsiness, dizziness, blurred vision or stiff muscles.
<b>Epilepsy</b>	May cause drowsiness, confusion or slowing of reactions.
<b>Pain</b>	Strong pain killers may cause slowing of reactions, impaired balance, drowsiness or confusion.
<b>Blood sugar control</b>	If blood sugar is too low you may become confused, weak or light-headed.
<b>Allergy / cold remedies</b>	May cause drowsiness, blurred vision or confusion.

**If you are experiencing any of the problems listed above or if you are worried about your medications and/or your risk of falling, please contact your pharmacist or GP Practice to discuss.**