



# Positive Steps

## Positive Steps to Avoid Slips, Trips and Falls





**This booklet has been designed to support the Positive Steps falls awareness programme aimed at older people who are at risk of falls in Ayrshire and Arran.**

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# Alcohol

## Recommended low risk guidelines:

### Adults

- Should not drink more than 14 units per week
- Have several alcohol free days per week
- Spread your drinking over 3 or more days
- Limit the total amount you plan to drink
- Drink slowly, alternate with water, have food along with your drink.

### This may be too high for older adults as alcohol can:

- increase unsteadiness and risk of having a fall
- disturb sleep patterns
- impact on co-ordination and memory, leading to falls and general confusion
- lower your mood
- interfere with prescribed medications, causing some drugs to be exaggerated such as diazepam (Valium) and reducing the effectiveness of some others e.g. tablets to reduce high blood pressure
- cause thinning of the bones when drunk at higher levels.

**Experts\* recommend reducing the daily alcohol units for over 65's:**

**Women** = 1 to 1.5 alcohol units per day (with at least 2 alcohol free days per week)

**Men** = 1.5 to 2 alcohol units per day (with at least 2 alcohol free days per week)

**Contact Ayrshire Council on Alcohol 01292 281238 for further information or advice.**



\*Guidance from The Royal College of Psychiatrists

# Sensory impairment

Problems with vision and hearing can be important factors in a fall. Poor vision can affect balance and co-ordination as well as the more obvious difficulties of negotiating uneven ground or steps.



## Eyesight

**Fact** – older people with a visual impairment have double the risk of falling

**Fact** – 80% of people with a visual impairment are over 60

**Fact** – a 60 year old needs three times as much light as a 20 year old!

**Action** – Go for regular eye tests and wear glasses of the correct strength

**Action** - Improve lighting and de-clutter

**Action** - Use bold and bright colours to highlight areas of your home (e.g. steps). A good colour contrast makes things easier to see.



## Hearing loss

Loss of hearing is common as people age, and is frequently ignored or not treated.

Hearing loss can be caused by inner ear problems which tend to affect balance. People with hearing loss may also have a general lower awareness of their surroundings, or may be distracted by their hearing problem from carrying out tasks such as balance and walking.

Even mild hearing loss may increase the risk of having a fall. It might be worth having a hearing test and investigating hearing problems further.



### For further information contact:

#### Sensory Impairment Teams

- East Ayrshire **01563 576930**
- South Ayrshire **01292 616261**
- North Ayrshire **01294 552771**

#### Hear to Help Ayrshire and Arran (Action on Hearing Loss)

**07391 017781**





# Continence

Incontinence is urgency where you need to get to the toilet quickly. It is better to go to the toilet regularly rather than waiting until the need is at its highest. Constipation can also irritate the bladder.

Nocturia is where you need to get up several times during the night to go to the toilet. Falls can occur due to stumbling in the dark or through tiredness. Try to not to rush and have adequate lighting e.g. safety lights, touch lamps.

## **Don't struggle with incontinence by yourself, here are some useful tips:**

- Try to drink as normally as possible. Normal fluid intake is 6-8 cups per day. Cutting down on liquids will make things worse
- Reduce caffeine intake e.g. coffee, tea
- Try to avoid constipation by eating a balanced diet with plenty of fibre
- Contact your GP (family doctor), practice or district nurse to access specialist continence services and clinics.

## **NHS Ayrshire and Arran Continence Service helplines are available:**

**Hospital**

**01292 617073**

**Community**

**01292 513819**





# Diet



**The most important areas around diet that older people need to be aware of are:**

**Calcium and Vitamin D** – both are important for healthy teeth and bones

**Osteoporosis** - thinning of the bones

**Malnutrition** - where your body lacks essential nutrients

You could be malnourished whether you are over or underweight because you aren't getting the balance of foods in your diet right. For example, you can be a healthy weight but if you eat a limited range of foods your body may lack essential nutrients.

## **Tips for eating well:**

- Eat lots of fruit and vegetables
- Base your meals on starchy foods (e.g. pasta, rice, potatoes, bread)
- Cut down on saturated fat and sugar (e.g. cakes, biscuits, fried foods, ice cream)
- Eat less salt – no more than 6g a day for adults
- Eat more fish – including a portion of oily fish each week
- Drink plenty of water
- Be more active and try to be a healthy weight
- Don't skip breakfast.

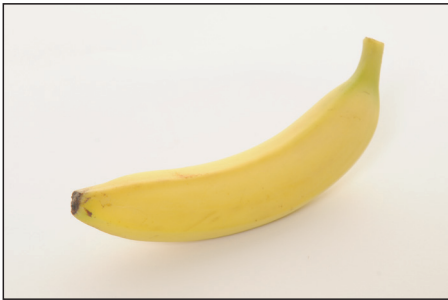


## Reducing the risk of malnutrition\*

**You may be at risk of malnutrition if you are eating or drinking less than usual, or if you are losing weight without trying. There are some important changes you can make to your diet if you think you may be at risk of malnutrition:**

- Try and use one pint of full fat milk a day
- Enrich milk by adding four tablespoons of dried, skimmed milk powder to one pint of full fat milk. Use this in tea, coffee, milky drinks, cereals and puddings
- Spread butter or margarine thickly and add to potatoes and vegetables
- Add cheese to sauces, vegetables, potatoes, pasta and grate over ready meals
- Add cream to soups, stews, porridge, potatoes, fruit and puddings
- Eat little and often. Try to include two to three nourishing snacks a day
- Avoid low fat or diet products
- Make sure you take at least six to eight drinks throughout the day. Nourishing drinks include milky tea, coffee, milkshakes, smoothies, hot chocolate or malted milk drinks.





\* If you have diabetes please consult your family doctor (GP), nurse or dietitian before making any of these changes. If you continue to struggle with your appetite or are still losing weight after 4 weeks of following this advice speak to your GP, nurse or dietitian.

### **Further information:**

Fact sheets on diet and health are available on the 'Food Facts' section of the British Dietetic Association website, [www.bda.uk.com](http://www.bda.uk.com)





# Eatwell Guide

Use the Eatwell Guide to help you get a balance of healthier and more sustainable food. It shows how much of what you eat overall should come from each food group.



Source: Public Health England in association with the Welsh Government, Food Standards Scotland and the Food Standards Agency in Northern Ireland

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# Stay Active

Try to be active every day and aim to include moderate and vigorous intensity activities in your routine. Moderate intensity activities include ballroom dancing and brisk walking. Vigorous intensity activities include climbing stairs or running.

Try to improve muscle strength by carrying shopping or taking part in chair based exercise classes.

Improving balance and co-ordination can help reduce the risk of falls. Take part in activities like yoga, tai chi or the Invigor8 programme.

Spend less time sitting and slot in activity to your daily routine, such as gardening, washing the car or walking part of the way instead of taking the bus or car.

## Local activity opportunities

Invigor8 is a programme of exercise classes for the over 65s. It supports people at risk of falls to exercise at a level suited to their ability. The classes are led by highly trained and experienced instructors. Invigor8 is suitable if you are fearful of falling, feeling unsteady on your feet, have had a previous fall or if you have osteoporosis. Classes are designed to help build and maintain eight core components: balance, strength, flexibility, endurance, how to get down on the floor and back up, floor work, tai chi and confidence building. You can self refer to the scheme or be referred by a health or social care professional.



**For more information on Invigor8 contact:**

<b>South Ayrshire</b>	<b>01292 269793</b>
<b>East Ayrshire</b>	<b>01563 576972</b>
<b>North Ayrshire</b>	<b>01294 605128</b>

**Active Scotland - [www.activescotland.org.uk](http://www.activescotland.org.uk)**

Search for activities in your local area.

**South Ayrshire Life** **0800 432 0510**  
**[www.southayrshirelife.org](http://www.southayrshirelife.org)**

**My East Ayrshire** **[www.my-east-ayrshire.co.uk](http://www.my-east-ayrshire.co.uk)**

**Vibrant Communities (East Ayrshire)** **01563 576354**

**Carena (North Ayrshire)** **[www.carena.org.uk](http://www.carena.org.uk)**

**Voluntary organisations often provide details of local health and wellbeing opportunities in your area.**

**Contact:**

**Voluntary Action South Ayrshire (VASA)**

**01292 432661**

**The Ayrshire Community Trust (North Ayrshire)**

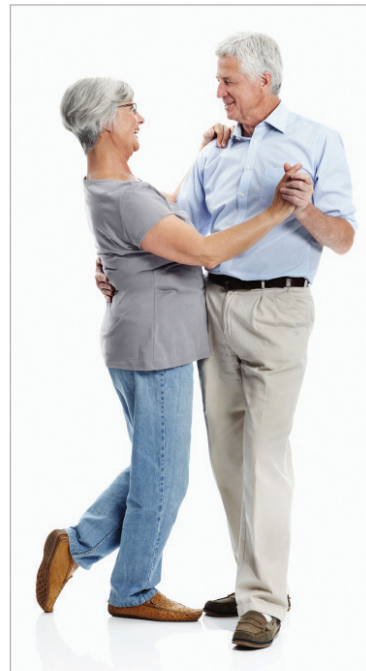
**01294 443044**

**Arran Community and Voluntary Service**

**01770 600611**

**Council Volunteer Organisation (CVO)**

**01563 574000**



# Keep your feet healthy

## Toenail care

- Cut, clip and file toenails safely; keep them at a length which feels comfortable. Trim your nails straight across and smooth the corners with an emery board or nail file. This prevents the nail from growing into the skin.

## Skin care

- Wash feet daily using warm water and mild soap but don't leave them to soak as this destroys the natural oils in your skin and can increase damage. Dry thoroughly especially between the toes.
- Smooth and moisturise dry and rough skin. Avoid use of moisturiser between the toes.
- Check for cracks and breaks in the skin and signs of inflammation. Look for signs of infection or other obvious early problems and seek professional advice.

## Checking footwear

- 70% of foot problems are caused by footwear, therefore it is important to ensure you are wearing shoes that fit well and do not cause your feet any pain
- Always get the right size and width. You should be able to wriggle your toes inside the shoes comfortably
- For everyday use, choose a shoe with a fastening strap or lace. This will act like the seat belt in a car and prevent too much movement of the foot in the shoe
- A thick rubber sole is recommended in most cases. This acts as a shock absorber and protects the soles

- Watch out for seams or stitching - these can lead to painful areas on the toes
- Avoid use of ill fitting, soft, sloppy shoes or slippers as these can cause you to slip, trip or fall.

## Local services

The Podiatry Service can provide information and support on personal footcare by providing information packs for carers or practical education sessions for carers. There is also a web link providing tips and information :

**[www.lookafteryourfeet.info](http://www.lookafteryourfeet.info)**

**NHS Ayrshire and Arran Podiatry Services** – referral is through your GP or health professional or through filling out a Podiatry Self Referral Form which can be obtained from your local health centre alternatively, you can telephone the NHS Referral Management Centre on **01563 826361** and request that a Podiatry self-referral form is sent to you.

## Footcare and Toenail cutting services

**Foot Care Plus Service, North Ayrshire** **01294 311701**

**Feet 1st, East Ayrshire** **01563 574000**

**FootcAyr, South Ayrshire** **01292 281800**

A **Home Service** is also available in the South Ayrshire area. To find out more please contact: Pat Brown

**Tiptoes** **07762 416025**





# Home Hazards

**There are many hazards around your home which can be removed to help reduce the risk of falls. Use this checklist to see what changes you can make.**

## Home safety checklist

- Are your hall, stairs and walking areas well lit and kept free of clutter?
- Is there enough room to walk around the furniture in your home and to use a walking aid safely? (if needed)
- Are flooring and rugs in good repair with no curled edges?
- Are electrical cables and telephone cords kept tidy?
- Do you have a light and telephone beside your bed?
- Do you keep a nightlight on for night time trips to the toilet?
- Do you keep bedcovers and dressing gowns off the floor so they don't present a trip hazard?
- Are your light switches well placed and close to doors?
- Is there a light switch at the top and bottom of your stairs?
- Do you have handrails or bannisters at your steps and stairs?
- Do you have a sturdy stepping stool with slip resistant feet, no more than three steps high, for simple household tasks such as changing a lightbulb? Ask a family member or friend to help you with these jobs.



- Do you have a slip resistant mat for use in the bath or shower?
- Do you keep items which are used most often at a suitable height to avoid bending or climbing?
- Are your windows and blinds easily accessible without having to reach or lean too far?
- Do you clean up spills as soon as they happen?
- Are your garden paths and steps level, stable and kept free of moss? Do you have safety rails and barriers where there are changes in garden levels?

## What do I need to do to my home to make it safer?

1.

2.

3.





## **Local services**

Care & Repair is a service which provides advice and practical assistance, including small repairs, on home maintenance to elderly and disabled home owners in North, and East Ayrshire. For more information contact your local office.

### **East Ayrshire Care & Repair offer a small repairs service**

**01290 428011**

**info@shirehousing.com**

### **North Ayrshire Care & Repair offer a small repairs service**

**0800 0681464**

**[www.shirehousing.co.uk/careRepair.asp](http://www.shirehousing.co.uk/careRepair.asp)**





# Telehealthcare



**Smart Supports allow you to live at home safely and independently while still being able to call for help if needed. These include movement sensors or chair or bed occupancy sensors which link to a central unit and trigger a call to a local operator or family member who can provide help.**

**Smart Supports provide reassurance and raise confidence of the wearer, particularly if they have had a fall. The following Smart Supports options are available:**

- A basic smart support unit comprises of a unit, pendant and smoke detector.
- For people who experience falls during the night a bed occupancy sensor can be linked to a lamp to provide light when the individual gets up. The bed occupancy sensor can also be set to trigger an alert if the person does not return to bed after an agreed time (e.g. 20 minutes).
- If falls are linked to extremes in temperature a temperature extremes sensor may help to prevent individuals from becoming too cold.
- A Buddi system uses satellite navigation technology to pinpoint a wearer's location, and a mobile phone network to communicate between the Buddi and an operator. It has an inbuilt falls detector and is suitable for someone at risk of falls who also has a degree of cognitive impairment.

- The 'Just Checking' system can be used to gather information on a person's daily activity which is shown simply as a line on a chart. The information gathered can be used along with the views of the individual, family and care providers to minimise risk, identify areas for other Smart Support options and ensure that care is client centred and meets the need of the individual.

**To find out more, contact the local Smart Support team in your area:**

**South Ayrshire  
East Ayrshire  
North Ayrshire**

**01292 281993  
01563 503371  
01294 310222**



Pendant and falls detector



Smoke alarm



Buddi system



Dispersed unit



# What should I do if I have a fall?

## I can get up...

**Ease yourself up onto your elbows**



**Move onto your hands and knees**



**Hold onto a stable/firm surface to support yourself**



**Raise yourself into a standing position**



**Turn yourself gently and sit on a firm surface**



# I can't get up...

## Can I attract attention?

- Shout and bang something
- Press your pendant alarm
- Use the telephone if you can



## Can I get comfortable?

- Find a nearby cushion or rolled up jumper as a pillow
- Keep warm, cover yourself with clothing, a tablecloth or rug



## Can I keep moving?

- Move positions to avoid getting sores
- Move joints to avoid stiffness and help circulation
- Roll away from damp area if your bladder 'lets go'

**Always tell your GP or health professional about your fall.**



## Falls screening

Falls screening in Ayrshire is provided by a Falls Assistant Practitioner through the Intermediate Care Service. There is a Falls Assistant Practitioner in North, South and East Ayrshire. A falls screen takes place in your home and helps identify any personal or environmental risks that contribute to slips and trips. The Falls Assistant Practitioner can then refer you to further services as may be appropriate for you.

### Contact your local Intermediate Care Service and ask for a falls screen:

<b>South Ayrshire</b>	<b>01292 660444</b>
<b>North Ayrshire</b>	<b>01294 400616</b>
<b>East Ayrshire</b>	<b>01563 507955</b>

### Further information:

NHS inform's Preventing Falls section at  
**[www.nhsinform.scot/aboutfalls](http://www.nhsinform.scot/aboutfalls)**

Self assess your risk of falls and create your own plan using the Falls Assistant tool at **<https://fallsassistant.org.uk/>**











# Your falls plan

**What are your goals after listening to the Positive Steps presentation?**

1.

2.

3.

**What difference will this make to your life?**





## What changes will you make after taking part in the Positive Steps programme?

1.

2.

3.

## What would you do if you had a fall?

1.

2.

3.





# Top tips for Positive Steps

**These top tips provide a summary of the measures you can take to reduce your risk of falls.**

- **Lower your alcohol intake**

Alcohol can increase unsteadiness and the risk of having a fall, as well as interfering with prescribed medication.

- **Take medication as prescribed**

Always take medication as prescribed by your doctor and if any side effect is troubling you, speak to your doctor or pharmacist, or ask for a review of your medications.

- **Keep up your health checks**

Ensure you have your eyes tested regularly, your hearing checked if needed and take your annual free flu jab.

- **Have a healthy diet**

Calcium and vitamin D are important for bone strength. Aim to eat 2-3 portions of food rich in calcium per day, and try to get out in the sunshine for 10-15 minutes per day. Balance this with a healthy diet.

- **Stay active**

Keep mobile and try to include activities that focus on strength and balance, such as walking, dancing or tai chi.



- **Walking aid**

If you have a walking aid, make sure you use it and that it is maintained. Your physiotherapist can repair or replace your walking aid if needed.

- **Look after your feet**

Make sure you wear well fitting shoes around the home and get any foot problems checked.

- **Check your home for hazards**

Make sure your home is well lit and there are no trailing cables or trip hazards.

- **See what Smart Supports are available**

There are many devices that can help people live safely in their own home for longer, which alert carers or family if there is a problem. Ask your local Smart Supports team for details.

- **Make a falls plan**

After reading the information in the Positive Steps booklet, see what changes you can make to your lifestyle to ensure that you live free of falls.



# Useful contact numbers

The contact details below are examples of some services that you may find useful.

<b>NHS 24</b>	<b>111</b>
<b>Emergency service</b>	<b>999</b>
<b>GP (family doctor)</b>	

## **NHS Ayrshire & Arran Intermediate Care Services**

<b>South Ayrshire</b>	<b>01292 660444</b>
<b>North Ayrshire</b>	<b>01294 400616</b>
<b>East Ayrshire</b>	<b>01563 507955</b>

## **Ayrshire Sensory Impairment Teams**

<b>East Ayrshire:</b>	<b>01563 576930</b>
<b>South Ayrshire:</b>	<b>01292 616261</b>
<b>North Ayrshire:</b>	<b>01294 552771</b>
<b>Hear to Help Ayrshire and Arran (Action on Hearing Loss)</b>	<b>07391 017781</b>

## **NHS Ayrshire & Arran Continence Service**

<b>NHS Ayrshire &amp; Arran Hospital Continence Service</b>	<b>01292 617073</b>
<b>NHS Ayrshire &amp; Arran Community Continence Service</b>	<b>01292 513819</b>



## **NHS Ayrshire & Arran - Podiatry Services**

<b>Referrals and Appointments</b>	<b>01563 826361</b>
<b>General Podiatry Enquiries</b>	<b>01563 826735</b>

### **Footcare and Toenail cutting services**

<b>North Ayrshire – Foot Care Plus Service</b>	<b>01294 311701</b>
<b>East Ayrshire – Feet First Service</b>	<b>01563 574000</b>
<b>South Ayrshire – Footcayr service</b>	<b>01292 281800</b>

A **Home Service** is also available in the South Ayrshire area.  
To find out more please contact: Pat Brown at  
**Tiptoes** **07762 416025**

### **Scottish Fire & Rescue Service**

<b>free home fire safety check</b>	<b>0800 0731 999</b>
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<b>Police Scotland free home security check</b>	<b>101</b>
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<b>Ayrshire Council on Alcohol</b>	<b>01292 281238</b>
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### **Telehealthcare**

<b>South Ayrshire</b>	<b>01292 281993</b>
<b>East Ayrshire</b>	<b>01563 503371</b>
<b>North Ayrshire</b>	<b>01294 310222</b>

### **Social Services**

<b>South Ayrshire</b>	<b>0300 1230900</b>
<b>East Ayrshire</b>	<b>01563 554200</b>
<b>North Ayrshire</b>	<b>01294 310000</b>







## **Invigor8 – exercise service for people at risk of falls**

<b>South Ayrshire</b>	<b>01292 269793</b>
<b>East Ayrshire</b>	<b>01563 576972</b>
<b>North Ayrshire</b>	<b>01294 605128</b>

**Voluntary organisations – can provide details of health and wellbeing services in your area**

**Voluntary Action South Ayrshire (VASA) 01292 432661**

**The Ayrshire Community Trust  
(North Ayrshire) 01294 443044**

**Arran Community and  
Voluntary Service 01770 600611**

**East Ayrshire Council Volunteer  
Organisation (CVO) 01563 574000**

**Vibrant Communities (East Ayrshire) 01563 544765**

**Care & Repair  
East Ayrshire 01290 428011  
North Ayrshire 0800 0681464**





# Your notes







# Let's take action

**Positive steps ...  
... prevent falls!**