

Older persons – staying safe with medication and reducing your risk of a fall

Certain medicines can increase the risk of you having a fall because they can cause side-effects such as dizziness, drowsiness, or confusion. If you are getting side-effects or symptoms which you think could increase your risk of falling it is important to contact your GP surgery.

One of the ways your GP surgery can help is to review your medication with you. Sometimes it may be sensible for you and your clinician to consider stopping medication or lowering the dose you take.

Taking medication may be necessary for health, improving symptoms or prolonging life; but as people get older, they are at increased risk of side-effects from medication. Medication that was good when we were younger, may not be the best choice now.

Older people are more likely to have a fall because they may have vision loss, a long-term health condition, such as dementia or heart disease, or low blood pressure which can lead to dizziness. Older people who fall are more likely to have a serious injury, such as a hip fracture which can have a devastating impact on your life.

It is important to tell your GP surgery about any falls, or if you have had the feeling that you were going to fall. Falls are taken very seriously and there is a lot of support available to help you stay as active and healthy as possible.

Here are some questions you can ask at your medication review:

1. Why am I taking this medicine?
2. What are the potential benefits and harms of this medicine?
3. Does this medicine have any side-effects, for example could it affect my memory or cause me to fall?
4. Can I stop or reduce the dose of this medicine?

You can write in here any changes to your medication:

IMPORTANT - Do not stop taking medication without medical advice.
Please return any unwanted medicines to your Pharmacy for safe disposal