Prevent falls by knowing your medicines

Pharmacy Department, Lanesborough Wing

Patient information

Falls are not just the result of getting older. Many falls can be prevented and are caused by a number of things. An awareness of which of your medicines may cause falls can help lower this risk.

Why do people fall?

The reasons why people fall can include:

- Problems with balance
- Medical conditions including stroke, Parkinson’s, low blood pressure on standing
- Interaction or side effects of medication
- Wrong footwear or feet problems
- Poor vision
- Hearing problems
- Lack of exercise
- Hazards at home such as poor lighting or loose fitting rugs and carpets
- Alcohol.

Medicines and falling

Medicines can sometimes increase the chance of you falling. The more medicines you take, the greater the risk that you will fall. Some medicines can:

- lower your blood pressure and cause dizziness.
cause sleepiness which can sometimes last till the following day
- can cause changes in vision
- increase the risk of falling and confusion when taken with alcohol.

Medicines and vision

Many common medicines can cause side effects that can affect your vision (how you see). These can include such side effects as.

- light sensitivity
- watery eyes
- dry eyes
- blurred vision.

Many of these side effects are temporary and disappear with time or when the medication is discontinued. If you are concerned or have any questions about whether any medicines you are taking are affecting your vision, ask your GP, optician or community pharmacist for advice.

Medicines that can cause falls

This is a general guide only:

- **Antidepressants** can lower blood pressure, cause confusion, dizziness and sleepiness
- **Sleeping tablets** will cause drowsiness that may last till the next day
- **Water tablets** can dehydrate and can lower blood pressure causing dizziness
- **Heart medicines** can lower blood pressure and heart rate
- **Anti-psychotics** can cause confusion and drowsiness
- **Laxatives** can cause dehydration
- **Pain Killers** can cause confusion and drowsiness
- **Anti-histamines** can cause drowsiness (non-drowsy options are available, ask your GP or Pharmacist).
**Medicine Review**

If you think your medicines could increase your risk of falling or are affecting your vision then you may benefit from having a medication review from your **community Pharmacist**. Ask for a Medicine Use Review or ‘MUR’. They can help make sure that:

- your current medicines are working properly
- your medicines and doses are appropriate for you
- you have a chance to ask any questions you may have about your medicines.

**Useful tips about medicines**

- **It is important that you do not stop taking any medicines until you have spoken to your own doctor.**

- If you ever need to come to hospital, please bring any medication that you may be taking with you. This includes any tablets, capsules, inhalers, sprays, creams, eye or ear drops and injections as well as anything that you may buy from the high street chemist or health food shop, including herbal remedies.

- If you have any questions about your medicines, you can call the **Pharmacy Medicines Information** on 0208 725 1033.

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