



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte  
Health Service Executive

# Falls Prevention



***Falls Safety Information  
Booklet***

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# About Falls

As we age, the risk of falling naturally increases. The good news is that there are many simple steps we can take to lower that risk and maintain our independence. And when reducing the risk isn't possible, there are strategies we can use to manage falls if they happen. Some of these may seem obvious, but we don't always remember them.

## Role of an OT in relation to falls

An Occupational Therapist (OT) plays a key role in preventing falls by assessing a person's home and environment, identifying potential hazards, and recommending modifications to reduce risks. Their goal is to enhance independence and safety, enabling individuals to navigate their daily activities with a reduced risk of falling.



# *Preventing Falls*



## Medication:

Have your medication checked every **twelve months** to ensure it isn't contributing to **side effects** that may lead to falls.



## Nutrition:

**Eat well** to remain healthy and keep your bones strong- 3 meals a day, plenty of fluids and incorporate vit D to diet.



## Eyesight and Hearing:

Have your eyesight and hearing checked regularly to prevent trips.



## Exercise:

Keep active and do some sort of exercise everyday to enhance and maintain **mobility**.



## Feet:

Look after your feet- corns, bunions etc. may cause you to be unsteady. Wear well-fitted **shoes** or slippers with a closed back.



## Safe Home environment:

Reduce the risk of falls in your home by following the **safe environment** checklist and avoiding trip hazards.



## Inform your Doctor:

Always **inform your doctor** that you have had a fall so they can **check for any underlying issues**.

# What To Do If You Fall

## Attracting help

- **Call** for help if there is someone in the house.
- Use your **pendent alarm**.
- Use a **phone** to ring someone, if in reach.

## If you can get up

- **Roll** onto your front and get onto your **hands and knees**.
- Reach for a **firm surface to support** you.
- Pull yourself up and ease yourself into a **standing position**.

## If you can't get up

- **Get comfortable**- Place cushion/rolled up jumper under head.
- **Keep warm**- cover yourself with a blanket/ rug or extra clothing until someone comes.
- Keep moving to **avoid stiffness** and to improve circulation. **If you are experiencing significant pain, do not try to move.**



# Home safety checklist

Answer each of the following questions to enhance safety and reduce the risk of falls in your home environment. If you answer "no" to any question, review the suggestions provided next to it.

## Outdoor paths and walkways

1.	Is access to your front door, level and safe?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
2.	If you use a dryer or washing line, is it easy to reach and use?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
3.	Are outside paths in good repair and safe to use?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
4.	Is all outside 'clutter' kept tidy and out of the way?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
5.	Can you get to your bins safely?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
6.	Can you get to your post box easily?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

- Keep all steps and paths in good repair, well swept and free of moss and slime.
- Store all garden tools, hose, bikes etc. in a safe and secure place
- Don't go outside if it is too dark or in icy conditions.

## Lighting

1.	Is the pathway area outside well lit?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
2.	Is the stairwell well lit?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
3.	Can you move around your room at night? Are there any dark spots when you move around?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
4.	Can you switch on a light easily from your bed?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

- Give your eyes time to adjust if you move from a bright area to a darker one.
- Try to arrange lighting to avoid dark patches.
- Consider fitting an automatic security light.
- Have a night lamp beside your bed.

## Stairs and steps

1.	Do you have any steps outside? If so, are they safe and easy to use?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
2.	Do you have a step or a lip at your front/back door?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
3.	Do you have to step into your shower?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
4.	Do you have difficulty with stairs?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

- Consider grab rails for additional support.
- Make sure the grab rails are strong and well fitted.
- For difficulties with stairs: make sure to liaise with and tell a healthcare professional.
- Don't leave clutter on stairways or near steps.

## Trip hazards

1.	Are everyday items easy to reach?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
2.	Is the carpet in good repair and quite level? How safe are your rugs? Do you have any loose mats in the bathroom?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
3.	Have you got all the electrical flexes and telephone cords tucked well out of the way?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
4.	Can you get to your windows without climbing over things or taking risks?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
5.	Is your floor covering safe and in good repair?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
6.	Is there room to walk without obstacles or clutter?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

- Place everyday items in convenient locations.
- Repair or replace torn carpets. Rugs should be tacked/stuck down or removed.
- Avoid risky tasks and reaching or climbing over items. Ask someone to help.
- Tuck away trailing wires and tidy away clutter

## Slip hazards

- |    |  |                                 |                                |
|----|--|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. | Is your bathroom flooring safe and non slip?   | Yes<br><input type="checkbox"/> | No<br><input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. | Have you recently checked your slippers and shoes to make sure they are in good repair and not slippery? | Yes<br><input type="checkbox"/> | No<br><input type="checkbox"/> |

- Avoid walking in stockings or socks.
- Take up mats.
- Wipe any spillages or other liquids on the floor

## Transfers

- |    |  |                                 |                                |
|----|--|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. | Are you able to get on/off the dining chair?                         | Yes<br><input type="checkbox"/> | No<br><input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. | Is your favourite chair safe and comfortable and easy to get out of? | Yes<br><input type="checkbox"/> | No<br><input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. | Is your bed a good height for you to get in and out of?              | Yes<br><input type="checkbox"/> | No<br><input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. | Can you manage to get on and off the toilet easily?                  | Yes<br><input type="checkbox"/> | No<br><input type="checkbox"/> |

- Choose chairs with arm rests to support you to stand up.
- Liase with a therapist to consider assistive aids to ease transfers such as toilet frames, grab rails, raised toilet seats.

## Precautionary actions

- |    |  |                                 |                                |
|----|--|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. | Has someone reliable got a key in case of emergency?   | Yes<br><input type="checkbox"/> | No<br><input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. | Have you got a telephone near your bed, or any other means of calling for help if you need it? | Yes<br><input type="checkbox"/> | No<br><input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. | Could you raise the alarm if you fell in the bathroom?   | Yes<br><input type="checkbox"/> | No<br><input type="checkbox"/> |

- It is wise to make sure someone has access to your house to help you if necessary
- Consider a cordless telephone or a personal alarm and remember to take them with you.

# Useful Links

To find you local health service/ list of health centres:

**[www.hse.ie](http://www.hse.ie)**

For information videos on falls, exercise and bone health

**visit: [www.bonehealth.com](http://www.bonehealth.com)**

For information on osteoporosis visit

**[www.irishosteoporosis.ie](http://www.irishosteoporosis.ie) or call 016375050**

For information on osteoarthritis **visit**

**[www.arthritisireland.ie](http://www.arthritisireland.ie) or call 016618188**

Alzheimers Society of Ireland: Call **1800 341 341**

Carers association: Call **1800 240 724** or visit

**[www.carersireland.com](http://www.carersireland.com)**

For pendent alarm: Task **01 8435889, Senior Alert**

**Scheme** visit

**<https://www.pobal.ie/programmes/seniors-alert-scheme-sas/>**

National Council for the Blind: Call **01 8307033** or visit

**[www.ncbi.ie](http://www.ncbi.ie)**

# **Carlow/Kilkenny**

**Occupational Therapy  
Department**

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**‘Prevention is  
better than cure’**

## **CONTACT DETAILS**

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**Carlow Town and County (Not including  
Borris and St.Mullins): 076-1082027**

**Kilkenny City and North Kilkenny: 056 771 6516**

**South Kilkenny and South Carlow (Including  
Borris and St. Mullins): 056 7773900**

**[www.hse.ie](http://www.hse.ie)**



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