

PRESS RELEASE

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BOOST YOUR BONES AND PREVENT FALLS

The theme for this year's **Falls Awareness Week**, which runs from Monday 18 June to Friday 22 June, is "Boost your Bones" and NHS Wiltshire is working with Wiltshire Council and Age UK to raise awareness among older people of the importance of fall prevention and bone health.

Keith Humphries, Cabinet Member for Public Health and Public Protection, says "Falls are a serious problem for older people - around 30% of over 65s and 50% of over 80s fall every year often resulting in serious consequences, both physically and psychologically. In addition to bruising, fractures, and in some cases death, a fall can destroy confidence, increase isolation and reduce independence. "

Nationally there has been an increase in the number of older people who fall every year and in Wiltshire during 2010/11 there were an average of seven emergency admissions every day for falls in people aged 65 or over.

Maggie Rae, Corporate Director of Public Health and Public Protection, says "Falls can be very serious for older people and there are many simple steps you can take to reduce your chance of falls and fractures."

It is important to keep your bones strong and reduce the risk of osteoporosis - weight bearing activities like brisk walking, tennis, aerobics and dancing help strengthen bones and muscles, as well as improving co-ordination and balance so reducing the risk of falling.

Maintaining a balanced diet, that includes foods such as milk, cheese and yoghurt which are great sources of calcium, and taking a 10 minute stroll in the sunshine every day is a great way of getting Vitamin D and keeping healthy.

Keeping fit, eating healthily, getting your medication reviewed regularly, wearing shoes that fit properly and getting your eyesight checked regularly all help to make sure that many of the long term after-effects which follow a fall can be avoided.

An estimated 20,000 women in Wiltshire have osteoporosis which is a condition where bones become fragile and break more easily and men can also suffer from osteoporosis so it's important to try to keep as active as possible.

-ENDS-

What's happening in Wiltshire:

- NHS Wiltshire and Salisbury City Council are holding a Morning Mingle on Tuesday 26th June from 10am to 1pm. The Morning Mingle will include a Personal Fitness MOT and opportunities to take part in gentle exercise.
- Leaflets about falls and bone health will be available in Wiltshire Council libraries, older people's lunch clubs and AgeUK groups.
- Strength and Balance classes are available as part of the Active Health scheme. These classes are supported by Wiltshire Council in partnership with NHS Wiltshire, DC Leisure, AgeUK, Green Square Group and Aster Communities. For more information on classes visit www.wiltshire.gov.uk.

Contact details for further information:

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