

Friday, 31 March 2017

Moving right to stay upright

Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District (ISLHD) is promoting the message *moving right to stay upright* as part of this year's April Falls Day[®] which aims to raise awareness about preventing falls and harm from falls in hospital, the community setting and residential aged care facilities.

ISLHD Clinical Quality Systems Manager, Gaye Sykes said the Local Health District is supporting this year's April Falls Day on Monday, April 3 by spreading the falls prevention message to staff and the community through information stalls and education sessions.

More than one in three people 65 years or older fall at least once a year and there is good evidence balance and strength exercises can reduce a person's risk of falling and increase the likelihood of them staying independent and active. Poor balance and strength will affect a person's ability to move well and put them at an increased risk of a fall.

NSW Falls Prevention Program Lead, Lorraine Lovitt has outlined some common issues people may face as they age and she encourages older people to speak to a health care professional if they start to notice any of the following issues:

- Can't keep up with friend when walking
- Tripping over low lying objects e.g. a grandchild's toy
- Feeling wobbly on your feet when standing still
- Not feeling confident to go up and down stairs.
- Recent slips, trips or falls

A health professional can test balance and strength, suggest some exercises to do at home or help find a local exercise program that includes balance and strength exercises (such as Stepping On or Tai Chi) by using the Active and Healthy website

www.activeandhealthy.nsw.gov.au

The Clinical Excellence Commission's, NSW Falls Prevention Program has developed a range of resources for carers and health staff which are available on the Clinical Excellence Commission website:

<http://www.cec.health.nsw.gov.au/patient-safety-programs/adult-patient-safety/falls-prevention/april-falls-day>

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