



EUROPEAN
ACADEMY OF
DERMATOLOGY &
VENEREOLOGY

Information Leaflet
for Patients



Fall prevention in older adults: Protecting Fragile Skin and Maintaining Independence

The aim of this leaflet

This leaflet provides information for older adults and their caregivers about fall risk and its specific consequences for ageing skin. As skin becomes thinner, more fragile, and slower to heal with age, even minor falls may result in significant injury. Preventing falls is therefore an essential part of geriatric dermatologic care.

Important disclaimer: This brochure provides general guidance only and is not a substitute for individualized medical evaluation or treatment.

Fall prevention in older adults:

Protecting Fragile Skin and Maintaining Independence

Advice for caregivers

- Get a piercing done by an experienced piercer in a hygienic setting with sterile materials.
- Encourage supervised exercise
- Maintain safe flooring and adequate lighting
- Assist with medication review
- Inspect the skin daily
- Seek medical advice after significant falls

Why fall prevention matters in geriatric dermatology

With ageing, the skin undergoes structural and functional changes:

- Thinning of the epidermis and dermis
- Delayed wound healing
- Reduced collagen and elastin
- Reduced barrier integrity
- Increased vascular fragility

Falls may result in:

- Skin tears
- Slow-healing wounds
- Age-related bruising
- Secondary infections
- Subcutaneous hematomas
- Chronic ulcer formation

Factors such as physical weakness, muscle loss, nerve problems, itching that affects balance, long-term health conditions that cause ongoing swelling and irritation, and taking multiple medications can all increase the risk of falls.

FALL PREVENTION
Think FALL PREVENTION

- F** **Flexibility & Strength** – Balance and skin protection
- A** **Adequate Lighting** – Reduce environmental hazards
- L** **Light, Well-Fitting Shoes** – Improve stability
- L** **Let go of “Falls are normal”** – They are preventable
- P** **Provide a Safe Environment** – Mats, rails, hazard removal
- R** **Review Medications** – Identify dizziness and sedation risks
- E** **Exercise Regularly** – Strength and reaction time
- V** **Vision & Hearing Checks** – Improve spatial awareness
- E** **Emerging Smart Technology** – Fall detection and monitoring
- N** **Nutrition & Vitamin D** – Support muscle and skin repair
- T** **Temporary Hypotension Prevention** – Stand up slowly
- I** **Install Assistive Devices** – Cane or walker if needed
- O** **Observe Warning Signs** – Recurrent falls require evaluation
- N** **Notify Your Doctor After a Fall** – Early assessment prevents complications

While every effort has been made to ensure that the information given in this leaflet is accurate, not every treatment will be suitable or effective for every person. Your own clinician will be able to advise in greater detail.