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Issue 3.3

# તમારી તબિયત

**Your Health**

**Summer Edition**



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Welcome to our summer issue including a collection of  
articles from our team.

We hope you enjoy reading them!

If you would like to get involved or have any feedback, please email us at  
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# Hypothyroidism

by Dr Christian Asante-Baah MD, BSc (Hons)  
*General Medicine - Princess Alexandra Hospital*

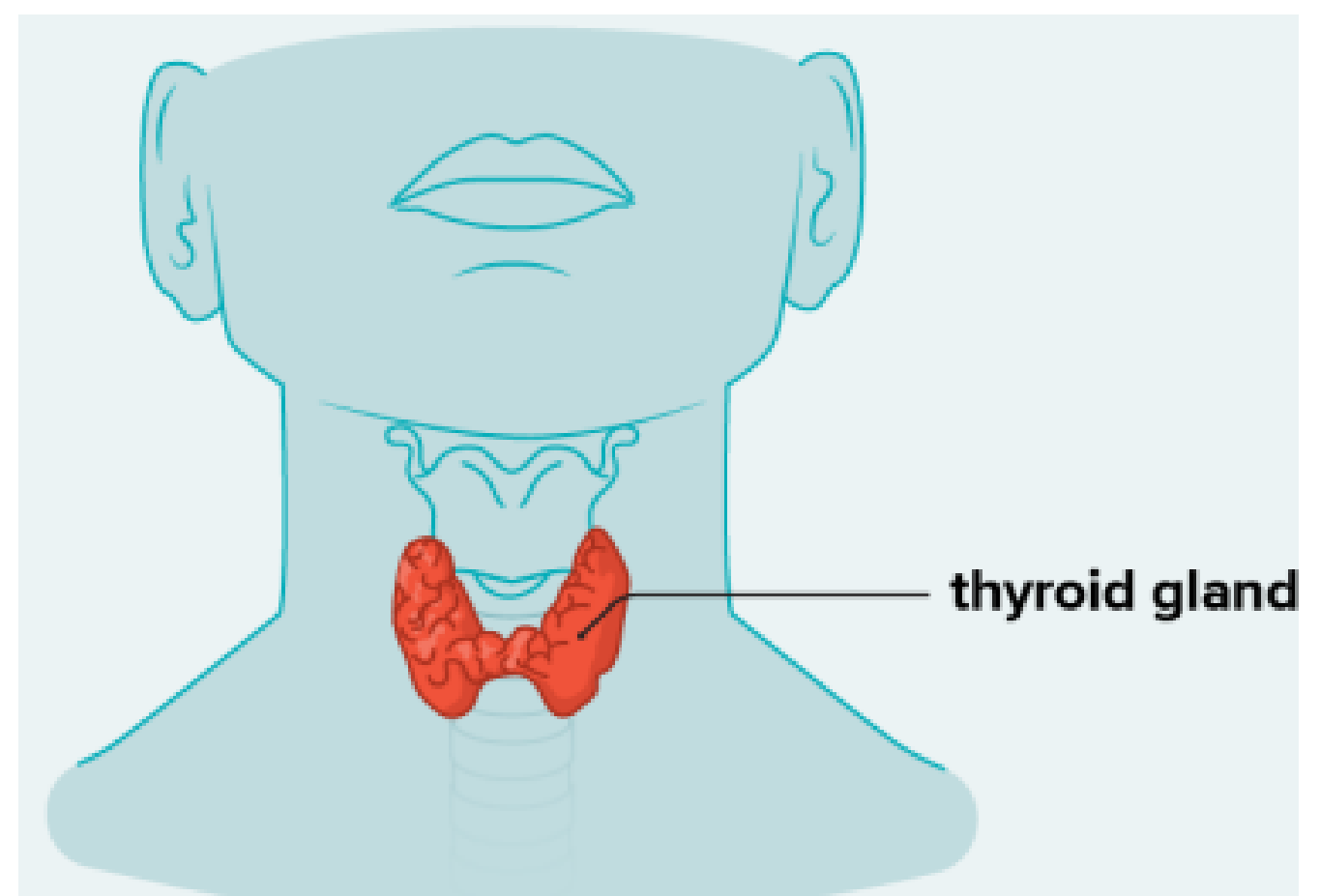
## What is hypothyroidism?

Hypothyroidism (also known as underactive thyroid disease) occurs when your thyroid gland doesn't create and release enough thyroid hormone into your body.

The thyroid gland is a small, butterfly-shaped organ located in the front of your neck just under the voice box. The main job of the thyroid is to control your metabolism. Metabolism is the process that your body uses to transform food to energy your body uses to function. The thyroid creates the hormones T4 and T3 to control your metabolism. These hormones work throughout the body to tell the body's cells how much energy to use. They control your body temperature and heart rate.

When your thyroid works correctly, it's constantly making hormones, releasing them and then making new hormones to replace what's been used.

Hypothyroidism can affect people of all ages, genders and ethnicities. It's a common condition, particularly among women over age 60. Women are generally more likely to develop hypothyroidism after menopause.



## What causes hypothyroidism?

Hypothyroidism can have a primary or secondary cause. A primary cause is a condition that directly impacts the thyroid and a secondary cause is something that indirectly affects the thyroid gland function.

# Hypothyroidism

by Dr Christian Asante-Baah MD, BSc (Hons)  
*General Medicine - Princess Alexandra Hospital*

Primary causes of hypothyroidism are much more common. The most common is an autoimmune condition called Hashimoto's disease, this condition is hereditary. In Hashimoto's disease, the body's immune system attacks and prevents the thyroid from making and releasing enough thyroid hormone. The other primary causes of hypothyroidism can include: thyroiditis (inflammation of the thyroid), treatment of an over active thyroid, iodine deficiency and in some cases, thyroiditis can happen after a pregnancy (postpartum thyroiditis) or a viral illness.

## **What are the symptoms of hypothyroidism?**

The symptoms usually develop slowly over time and can include:

- Feeling tired
- Numbness/tingling in your hands
- Constipation
- Weight gain
- Feeling depressed
- Being unable to tolerate cold temperatures
- Having dry, coarse skin and hair
- Having frequent and heavy menstrual periods
- Feeling more forgetful ("brain fog")



# Hypothyroidism

by Dr Christian Asante-Baah MD, BSc (Hons)  
*General Medicine - Princess Alexandra Hospital*

## How is hypothyroidism diagnosed and treated?

The main way to diagnose hypothyroidism is a blood test called the thyroid stimulating hormone (TSH) test.

In most cases, hypothyroidism is treated by replacing the amount of hormone that your thyroid is no longer making. This is typically done with a medication. One medication that is commonly used is called levothyroxine. Taken orally, this medication increases the amount of thyroid hormone your body produces.

Hypothyroidism is a manageable disease. However, you will need to continuously take medication to normalise the amount of hormones in your body. With careful management, and follow-up appointments to make sure your treatment is working properly, you can lead a normal and healthy life



**تامری طبیات**  
**Your Health**

Written by

**Dr Christian Asante-Baah**

# Over The Counter Medications – How To Help From Home

by Dr Haania Abbasi MD MRCEM

*Senior Emergency Medicine Registrar - Royal Melbourne Hospital, Australia*

Sometimes patients will wait hours to be seen only to then be told they can buy the same medications they've received "over the counter" – this means **without a prescription**.

Another common reasoning I've encountered are patients often feeling they'll 'mask' their symptoms by taking medication at home, and they're *not fixing the underlying problem* but most physicians work with a step by step approach. Often if your symptoms are sinister and needing medical attention, they will find a way of resurfacing even AFTER taking medicine.

The following article is not a substitute for medical care. If you are unwell or experiencing symptoms causing you distress or concern, please either call 111 for advice or present to your local Emergency Department.

I thought it best to make a QUICK reference table with common medication names for adults, what they're best used for and POTENTIAL side effects – emphasis on two things here:

1. **Quick Reference** – a brief overview to give people at home a general idea about common medications.
2. **Potential**, these medications are considered safe for the majority.

For a full detailed review, we advise speaking to a pharmacist or nurse practitioner.



# Over The Counter Medications – How To Help From Home

by Dr Haania Abbasi MD MRCEM

Senior Emergency Medicine Registrar - Royal Melbourne Hospital, Australia

Medication Name	Main Use	<u>Potential</u> Side Effects
Paracetamol	Pain, fever	Drowsiness, fatigue Note if your weight is less 50kg – 1 tablet is the recommended dose
Ibuprofen	Pain, fever, swelling, sport injuries	Stomach irritation – <i>gel forms can avoid this</i>
Co-codamol: <b>Codeine</b> + Paracetamol (8mg/500mg)	Pain (stronger than paracetamol and ibuprofen), cough	Drowsiness, nausea, constipation, headaches
Buscopan	Stomach cramps/spasms	Dry mouth, constipation, blurred vision
Omeprazole	Stomach pain, Reflux	Headache
Gaviscon	Reflux	Wind, bloating
Loperamide	Persistent diarrhoea >3days	Constipation, bloating
Laxatives – Senna/Docusate	Constipation: Senna-stimulates movement Docusate – stool softener	Tummy pain, diarrhoea, cramping
Bonjela	Teething, mouth ulcers	Stinging, numbness
Anbesol	Mouth ulcers, tooth ache	Irritation, headaches



# Over The Counter Medications – How To Help From Home

by Dr Haania Abbasi MD MRCEM  
*Senior Emergency Medicine Registrar - Royal Melbourne Hospital, Australia*

Medication Name	Main Use	<u>Potential</u> Side Effects
Ceterizine/Loratidine	Allergy symptoms – rashes, hives, runny nose, hayfever	Headaches, difficulty sleeping
Calamine	Irritated, itchy skin	Dry skin
Clotrimazole	Fungal infection	Stinging, irritation
Canestan	Fungal infection	Stinging, itchiness, rash
Permethrin	Head lice	Stinging, rash, burning
Anusol	Haemorrhoids/Fissures	Redness, itching





# Menopause and HRT

by Dr Nivian Sukirthan MBBS iBSc DRCOG DFSRH  
*GP Registrar - North West London*

## Menopause

Menopause is when a woman hasn't had a period for at least a year, usually around age 51, but it can happen between ages 47 and 52. It marks the end of fertility as the ovaries stop producing normal levels of hormones.

Common symptoms of menopause include:

- Changes in period patterns
- Hot flushes, night sweats, and headaches
- Vaginal dryness and frequent urination
- Anxiety, depression, and memory problems
- Increased risk of heart disease and osteoporosis



Many women don't seek help, but treatments are available. The most common treatment is Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT), which replaces the hormones that the ovaries no longer produce (estrogen and progestogen). There are also other ways to manage symptoms without using HRT.

Lifestyle changes can help manage symptoms:

- Exercise, weight loss, and stress reduction can help with hot flushes.
- Good sleep habits can improve sleep disturbances.
- Exercise and relaxation can help with mood and cognitive symptoms.

# Menopause and HRT

by Dr Nivian Sukirthan MBBS iBSc DRCOG DFRH  
GP Registrar - North West London

## Hormone replacement therapy (HRT)

HRT can be taken as tablets, patches, creams, vaginal rings, or intrauterine systems like the Mirena coil. Most women need both estrogen and progestogen in their HRT, but women who've had a hysterectomy (removal of the womb) only need estrogen. Using estrogen alone if you still have your womb increases the risk of endometrial cancer, so it's combined with progestogen.

HRT isn't suitable for everyone. It shouldn't be used by those with current or past breast cancer, hormone-sensitive cancers, unexplained vaginal bleeding, or untreated thickening of the womb lining. Also, HRT is not a form of contraception.

There are some risks associated with HRT:

- Slightly increased risk of blood clots (VTE) with oral HRT, but not with patches.
- Slightly increased risk of stroke with oral estrogen HRT.
- Slightly increased risk of heart disease with combined HRT, but this doesn't apply if HRT starts before age 60.
- Increased risk of breast and ovarian cancer with all forms of HRT.

Despite these risks, HRT has many benefits:

- Reduces the risk of bone fractures from osteoporosis
- Maintains muscle strength
- Helps with symptoms like hot flushes, vaginal dryness, psychological issues, and period problems

As you can see, there are many ways to manage menopausal symptoms. Consult your GP for advice and guidance.

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Your Health



# Hair Loss - The Importance of Early Recognition and Early Treatment

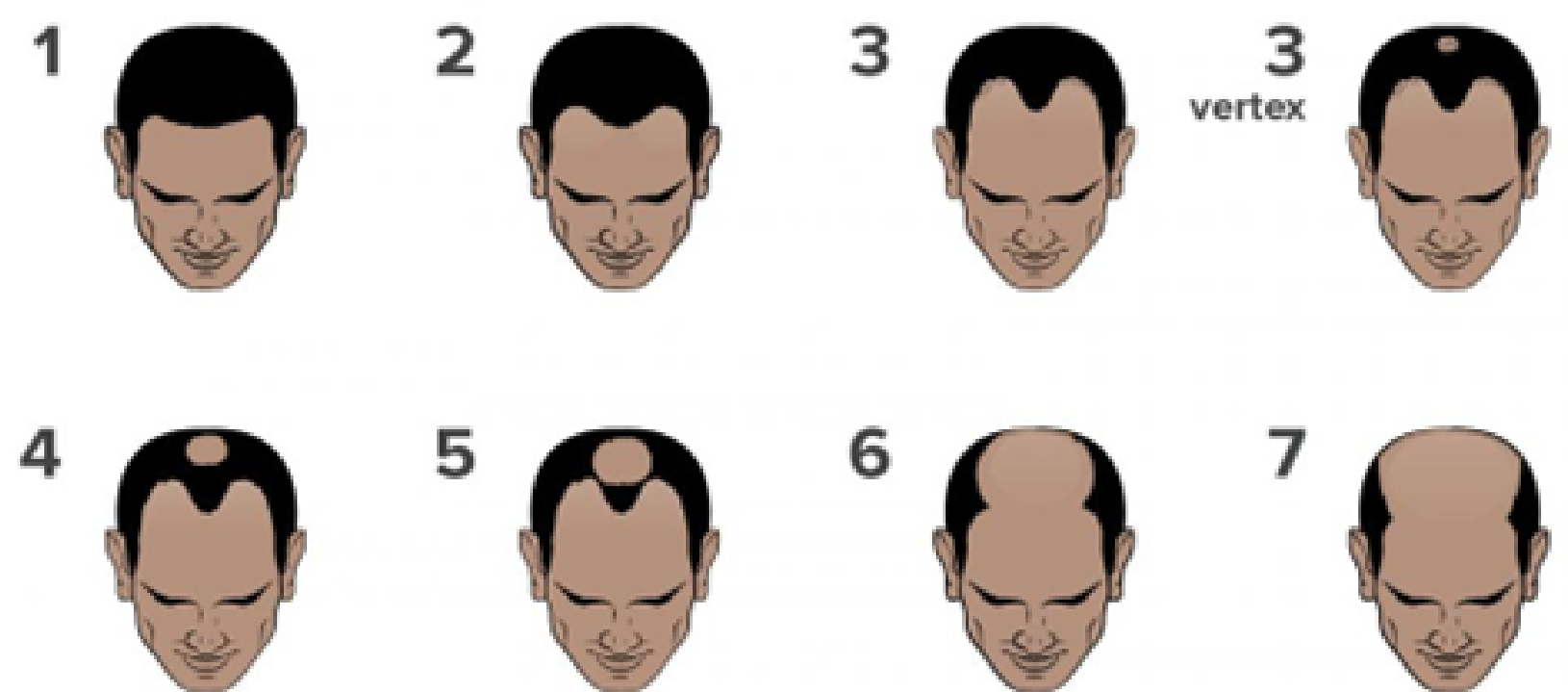
by Dhruva Bhogaita MPharm IP

*Independent Prescribing Pharmacist, Company Director - Compounding Chemist*

Male and female pattern hair loss, also known as androgenic alopecia, is a normal process as we get older and affects people in different ways. The age at which it starts and its severity depends on things like family history and stress. The way androgenic alopecia appears differs between men and women.

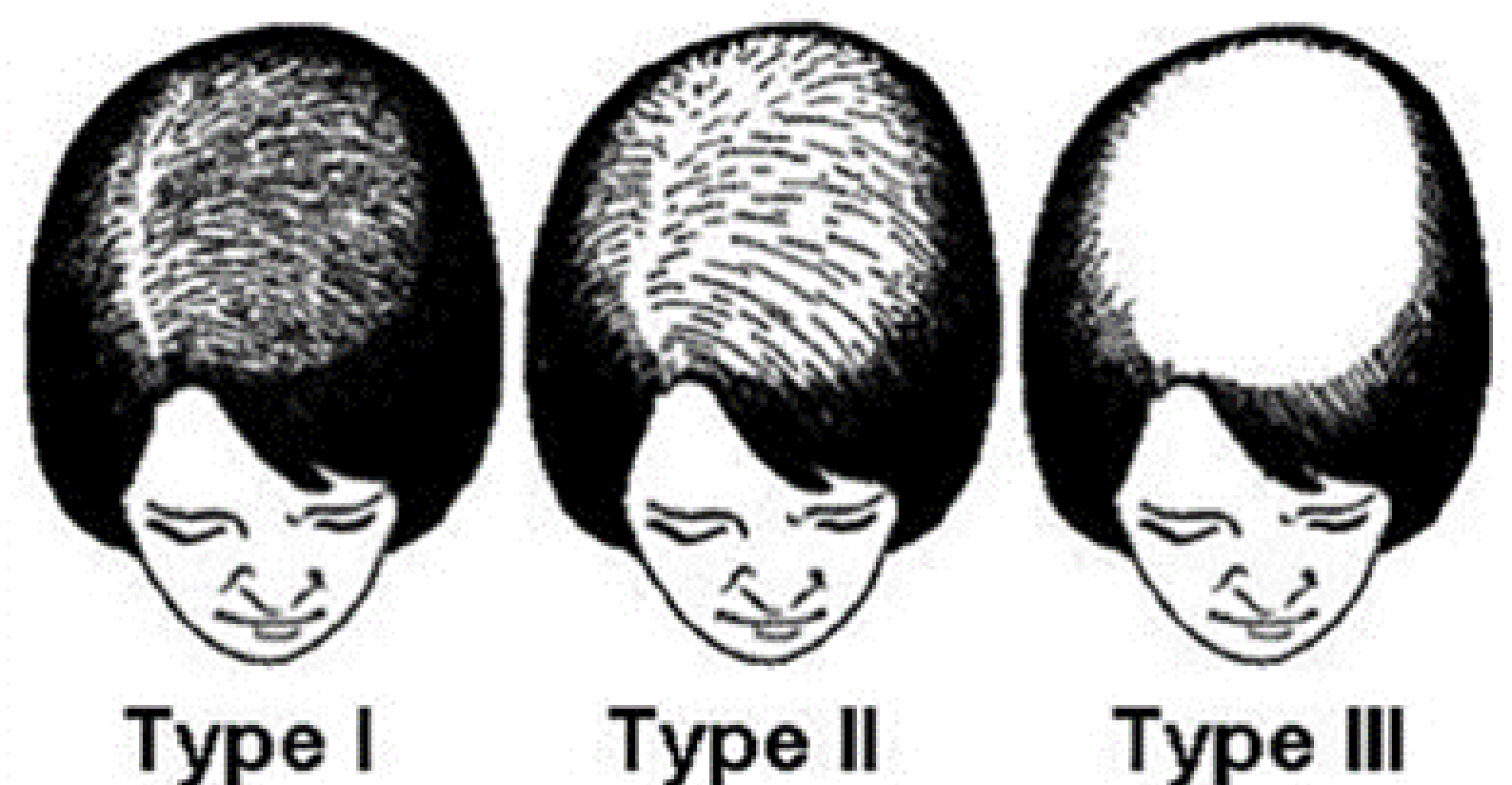
## Hair Loss in Men

Men often start losing hair at the front of the head and the top, which can make a noticeable “M” shape. This happens because of a hormone called DHT (dihydrotestosterone), which makes hair follicles (the tiny pockets that hair grows from) shrink. Over time, these follicles get so small that they stop growing hair altogether.



## Hair Loss in Women

Women usually experience hair loss as thinning all over the top of their head, typically starting at the parting. Unlike men, they don't usually lose hair at the front. Hormones and genetics play a big role in this type of hair loss, especially during menopause.





# Hair Loss - The Importance of Early Recognition and Early Treatment

by Dhruva Bhogaita MPharm IP

*Independent Prescribing Pharmacist, Company Director - Compounding Chemist*

With hair loss being a natural process of aging with family history playing a strong part there is little we can do on that side of things. However, there are a few things we can do to try to prevent hair loss where we can in our day to day lives:

## **Maintain a Healthy Diet:**

- Eat a balanced diet rich in vitamins and minerals, especially iron, zinc, vitamin D, and B vitamins.
- Include proteins - the hair is predominantly made up of keratin which is a protein. The body thinks the hair is it's last priority to nourish. If your diet does not contain enough protein, not enough will reach the hair to nourish it and make more keratin.

## **Reduce Stress:**

- Chronic stress can contribute to hair loss, so practices like meditation, yoga, and regular exercise can help manage stress levels.

## **Avoid Tight Hairstyles:**

- Styles like tight ponytails, braids, or buns can pull on the hair and cause traction alopecia over time.

## **Avoid Overwashing:**

- Washing hair too frequently can strip natural oils and lead to dryness and breakage. Aim to wash your hair 2-3 times a week, depending on your hair type and scalp condition.

## **Stay Hydrated:**

- Drink plenty of water to keep your scalp and hair hydrated.



## **Avoid Smoking and Limit Alcohol:**

- Both smoking and excessive alcohol consumption can contribute to hair loss.



# Hair Loss - The Importance of Early Recognition and Early Treatment

by Dhruva Bhogaita MPharm IP

*Independent Prescribing Pharmacist, Company Director - Compounding Chemist*

Hair loss is a normal part of aging and most people choose not to get treatment. For others hair loss may be severe, may affect their confidence or have a negative impact on their mental health. If that applies to you or someone you know, consider the below:

## Why Early Treatment is Important

Treating this type of hair loss early is really important. Here is why,

1. Save your hair follicles – once the hair follicle shrinks too much, they can't grow hair anymore. Early prevention helps keep these follicles health and working longer.
2. Better results: starting treatment early means you have a better chance of keeping your hair and even growing some back.

## Treatment options

There are different treatment options available, depending on the severity of your hair loss and your medical history. It's important to understand that any medicated treatment will require a long-term commitment.

## Take Action Early

If you notice your hair is thinning and it is a problem for you, don't wait to seek help. The sooner you start, the better your chances of keeping your hair and feeling good about your appearance. Talk to a doctor about the best treatment options for you.

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**Your Health**



Written by Dhruva Bhogaita

# Falls Prevention

by Dr Ravi Joshi MBBS  
*GP Registrar - Harlow*

Having a fall can injure and hurt anyone, but can have a greater impact on older people. With age, your risk of falling increases, which can cause injuries such as broken bones or head injuries. Falling can also affect someone's mental health, causing people to lose confidence, become withdrawn and feel like they have lost their independence.

So what increases your chance of falls? This can be separated into individual causes and environmental causes.

Individual causes are due to your own body and health such as:

- Weak muscles and balance issues
- Visual loss
- Health conditions like heart disease, dementia and low blood pressure

Environmental causes are due to your surroundings, such as:

- Wet floors
- Poor lighting affecting your vision
- Unsecured rugs and carpets
- Rushing to the toilet or up/down the stairs



The way to help prevent falls is by trying to tackle these environmental and individual causes. Make changes to your home and environment to make it as safe as possible, such as:

1. Mop up spillages and avoid walking on slippery surfaces
2. Remove clutter
3. Use non-slip mats and rugs
4. Installing hand rails on stairs and taking your time going up and down
5. Wear well fitting shoes that support the ankle
6. Avoid wearing loose fitting clothes around the house (like sari's)
7. Cut toe nails regularly



# Falls Prevention

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GP Registrar - Harlow

You can also reduce risk factors of falls that are caused by personal problems. You can increase your strength and balance by doing regular exercise to improve this. Simple exercises such as walking and dancing (yes this includes garba and bhangra) can improve your leg and core strength.

Also remember that visual loss can increase your chance of falls. So if you are concerned about your vision being poor even with glasses, book an appointment with your optician. Finally, alcohol can increase your chance of falls, so cutting back or avoiding alcohol, especially in older people will reduce the risks of falls and being severely injured.



If unfortunately you do fall and are unable to lift yourself back up due to lack of strength or pain try the next steps:

1. Try using furniture to help yourself up
2. If you can't, then try crawling to a phone to call 999 or get to an emergency buzzer if you have one
3. Try reaching for a blanket or dressing gown to keep you warm
4. Try to stay comfortable and change position every 30 minutes

If you are at risk of a fall and you are worried you won't be able to get up, try to keep a mobile phone or a personal alarm system on you at all times.

**तमारी तबियत**  
**Your Health**



Written by Dr Ravi Joshi

**We hope this has helped!**  
**Tame 100 varus na sukhi thav - May you live**  
**happily to 100 years!**

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**Your Health**



**Tamari Tabiyat - Your Health**