

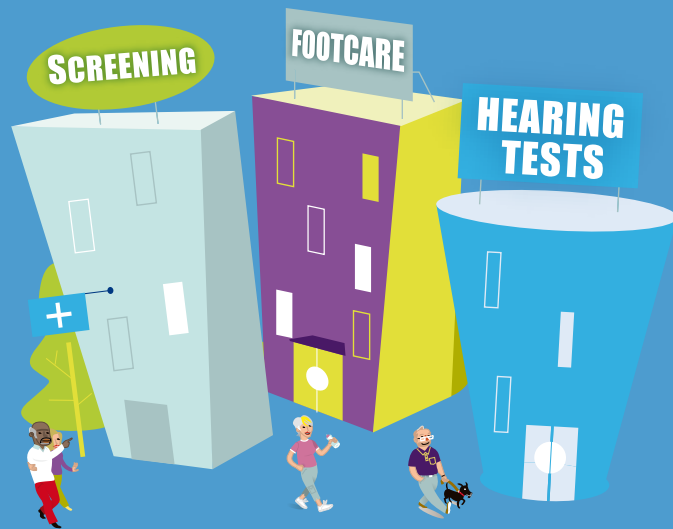
Health and social care services for people aged 50 and over to help maintain good health, well-being and independence

Keep on the road for longer



Produced in partnership by





Information

To find out which of the services in this leaflet you might benefit from contact NHS Direct, 24 hours a day, on 0845 4647 or make an appointment to speak to your GP or practice nurse.

For details of services available in your area, or to find a local GP, contact your local Primary Care Trust (PCT) or Patient Liaison Service (PALS). To find out your local PCT or PALS contact details visit the NHS Choices website at www.nhs.uk or call NHS Direct on 0845 4647.

For more information on how to stay healthy and independent for longer visit www.nhs.uk/livewell/staywellover50

For information on a range of health, care and other issues relevant to older people, call the Age Concern Information Line on freecall 0800 00 99 66 or go to the websites www.ageconcern.org.uk or www.helptheaged.org.uk

Please note, many of the services in this leaflet are available locally and these may be delivered differently from area to area.

If you're aged 50 or over then keeping your body in good condition is important. Taking full advantage of health checks and services, where they are available, could help keep you up and running for longer.

You might be years away from worries about mobility or whether you are able to stay in your own home, but accessing services now is the best way to help protect your independence in the future.

A range of health checks and services are available locally, ranging from eye tests to flu vaccinations. Combining these with keeping physically active, eating a healthy diet and maintaining a healthy weight will help you increase your chances of enjoying a healthy and happy later life.

The old adage, "prevention is better than cure" is as true today as it has ever been.

This leaflet gives details of current 'entitlements' and services you may be able to access, and when. We have concentrated on those issues that older people tell us are most important in helping them stay well and active. Bringing together this information is part of the Department of Health's contribution to the government's ageing strategy.

GET CHECKED OUT

Checks and services available to help keep you up and running for longer

Sight

Regular sight tests can help maintain good vision making it easier to get about and reducing the risk of accidents. Sight tests can also help catch conditions such as age-related macular degeneration, cataracts or glaucoma early when they are easier to treat.

If you are aged 60-69 you can ask for a free, NHS-funded sight test every two years. From age 70 it's every year. Tests are available, if you need them for a clinical reason, and vouchers may also be available to help pay for glasses if you are on a low income.

→ Make sure you get a free, NHS-funded sight test every two years if you are aged 60-69, every year if you are 70+. Visit your optician if you are concerned about your eyesight.

i For more information visit the common health questions section of www.nhs.uk

Hearing

Hearing problems can make it difficult to do everyday things like shopping or socialising. That's why it's important to get regular hearing tests.

Regular hearing checks can make sure any hearing impairment is picked up as soon as possible. If you do need a hearing aid, you will be assessed and fitted with an aid within 18 weeks.

→ Ask your GP to refer you for a hearing test if you think your hearing is getting worse or is causing problems.

i For an automated phone or online hearing check from the charity for deaf and hard of hearing people RNID, visit www.rnid.org.uk or call 0844 800 3838 (calls from a BT landline cost up to 5p per minute).

Footcare

For many people having healthy, pain-free feet is the key to living an independent and active life. That's why making sure your feet are well looked-after is a priority.

Affordable footcare may be available to many people who need it. In addition, people who have been assessed as needing treatment by an NHS chiropodist or podiatrist will be able to access these services.

→ Ask about locally available affordable footcare services. Your local Age Concern may also offer a nail cutting or footcare service. Call free on 0800 00 99 66 for contact details of your local Age Concern.

i For more information about footcare visit the Society of Chiropodists and Podiatrists' website www.feetforlife.org



Falls

Staying steady on your feet is important in later life. If you fall and fracture your wrist or hip it could affect your ability to remain living in your own home.

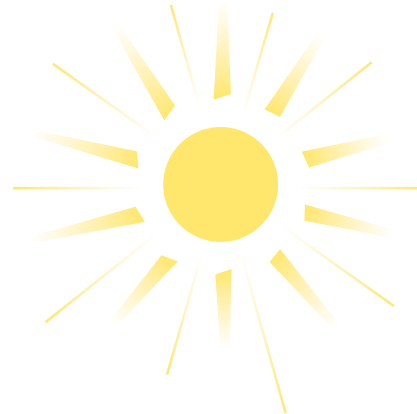
Local services are therefore helping people reduce their risk of falling.

These may include advice on exercising to keep a good posture and muscle tone, eating well, and removing hazards in the home to prevent trips and falls.

Tests may also be available to spot the early signs of the bone weakening condition known as osteoporosis. If you do fall and hurt yourself, you may be offered treatment such as scans, medication and exercise to help you back up on your feet again.

→ Find out about local services to help reduce the risk of falling.

i For more information visit the falls prevention section of www.helptheaged.org.uk



Vaccinations

Some influenza, or flu, viruses can lay you low for weeks, lead to hospitalisation or even prove fatal in older people.

That's why, at 65, you can ask for a free vaccination to reduce the risk of catching flu every year.

You can also have a free vaccination that offers protection against infections such as blood poisoning (septicaemia) and meningitis. Free yearly 'flu jabs' are also available to younger people for whom flu might be dangerous, including those with long-term conditions such as asthma and diabetes.

➔ Ask for a free vaccination to reduce the risk of catching influenza every year if you are aged 65 or over.

📄 For more information visit www.nhs.uk/conditions/flu-jab



Cancer screening

Regular screenings for cancer are important because picking up signs early enough can help give you a fighting chance of beating these serious conditions.

• Breast

If you are a women aged 50-70 and registered with a GP you will automatically receive a letter offering a free mammogram (breast scan) every three years. From age 70 you can ask for one every three years. From 2012 mammography invitations will be sent to all women aged 47-73.

• Cervical

Women aged 25-49 who are registered with a GP are invited for cervical screening every three years. Women aged 50-64 are invited every five years. Over-65s will be invited for cervical screening if they have never been screened or their last three tests were not clear.

• Bowel

From December 2009, bowel cancer testing kits will be automatically sent every two years to everyone aged 60-69 who is registered with a GP. If you are over 69 you can ask for a kit every two years. You will receive an invitation letter explaining the programme and an information leaflet. A week later, you will get the testing kit along with step-by-step instructions for using it at home.

📄 For more information about cancer screening visit www.cancerscreening.nhs.uk
To order information leaflets on screening call the freephone Department of Health publications orderline 0300 123 1002.

• AAA Screening

Screening for Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm (AAA) using ultrasound can help prevent this heart condition from becoming fatal. That's why AAA screening is being made available to all men in their 65th year over the next four years. Men with detected aneurysms will undergo regular surveillance scans in order to monitor the size of the AAA.

➔ Take advantage of all the screening services for serious conditions that are available.

📄 For more information about AAA screening visit <http://aaa.screening.nhs.uk>

Existing health problems

If you already have a health problem you can still help increase your chances of staying as healthy and independent as possible.

Telecare technologies, such as electronic sensors, are available to help you live independently at home. There are also

systems to alert a carer if someone who is confused is leaving the house at night.

Intermediate care services can offer care at home instead of at hospital. If you do need to go into hospital, these services help make sure the stay is shorter by supporting you to return home as soon as you are well enough. They can also support people who otherwise might need to go into long-term residential care by providing the opportunity to recuperate and to benefit from rehabilitation.

Knowing more about your health condition can really help. Once you have an understanding of your condition and its treatment, you will feel more confident and be more able to take care of yourself on a daily basis.

➔ Find out about telecare and intermediate care services available in your area.

📄 For more information, visit the Your health, your way section of NHS Choices www.nhs.uk for advice on self care support including information about health conditions, skills training, guidance on taking medicines, how to make an information prescription, agreeing a care plan and how to get the most from your visit to the pharmacist or GP.