



MEDIA RELEASE

Moving Right To Stay Upright

Thursday 23 March 2017

April is the month that local health services raise awareness of the importance of falls prevention in the community. April Falls Day will be celebrated on Monday 3rd April 2017 by promoting increasing mobility and the effect it has on decreasing falls.

A person's risk of falling increases as they age. According to the Injury Council of WA, 1 in 4 people over 60 will fall each year. By the age of 65 this number rises to 1 in 3. The theme this year for April Falls is Moving right to stay upright with Sunraysia Community Health Services hosting a community education session on Monday 3rd April 2017 between 10.30am and 12.30pm at SCHS, 137 Thirteenth St, Mildura.

Falls prevention is really everyone's business with falls contributing to 96,385 Australians over the age of 65 being hospitalised in 2011-2012 which is three and a half times as many cases as for 45-64 year olds (<http://www.aihw.gov.au/injury/falls/>) The most common type of injuries people sustain when they fell were fractures of the hip and leg.

"A bad fall when you're over 65 can not only cause injury but result in emotional harm through fear of future injury, restricting a persons independence" said Felicity Schiller, Physiotherapist at SCHS.

Poor balance and strength will affect a person's mobility and put them at an increased risk of a fall. As we age or when we are unwell mobility may be reduced due to the effects of medications, infections, muscle soreness, pain and illnesses. Balance and mobility may then get worse when we decrease activity due to the illness.

Falls occur most commonly around the home and families and individuals can do a lot to help prevent people being hurt through care and planning. Petra Haarmann, Occupational Therapist at SCHS identifies that the most common contributing factors to people having a fall are reduced strength and balance, poor vision, unsafe footwear, lack of physical activity and the effects of medication.

There is good evidence that balance and strength exercises can reduce a person's risk of falling. There are many options for people in Sunraysia to participate in an exercise program that will improve their balance and strength exercises such as Tai Chi and Nordic Walking with the Mildura Arthritis Peer Support, Mall Walking at Mildura Central, Warm Water exercises at Mildura Waves, Chair based exercises through MRCC and older adults gym classes at most Sunraysia gyms. Sunraysia Community Health Services currently run a 10 week Falls and Balance Program which combines weekly exercises with education sessions aimed at assisting people decrease their falls risk.



So come along to Sunraysia Community Health Services on Monday 3rd April between 10.30am and 12.30pm at SCHS, 137 Thirteenth St, Mildura to hear from physiotherapists, occupational therapists, tai chi leaders and optometrists on how you can increase your mobility and work towards decreasing your risk of falling. There will be Come and Try Nordic Walking and Tai Chi sessions between 12pm and 12.30pm and an opportunity to have a cup of tea and chat with the presenters and representatives from local exercise groups. For more information you can contact Linda Curran at Sunraysia Community Health on (03) 5022 5444.

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