

KEEP UP WITH KEEP- ING UP...

- **New On-line service directory for older people**
- **Is there a role for the humble glass of water in falls prevention?**
- **Active in Age... a local success story**
- **Free home safety checks—do you qualify?**
- **Taranaki Falls Strategy—our future plans**

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Welcome to our first newsletter!

Welcome to the very first issue of “Keeping Up” - the local newsletter designed to keep you up to date with information and news relating to the prevention of falls in older people.

Congratulations to the winner of our newsletter naming competition. Tim Connole, from TDHB Physiotherapy, suggested the name as a way of “Keeping Up with keeping up on your feet”. Tim won morning tea for his team — good on you Tim!

Well done also to the Hawera ED team who sent in more entries than any other team... we felt they deserved morning tea too! One of their suggestions has inspired an “Up and About” section as a regular feature (see page 4).

New Plymouth injury Safe plan to send this newsletter out quarterly, following our local Falls Strategy Group meetings. As well as keeping people posted on what is happening with the local Falls Prevention Strategy, we would like to give service providers and organisations an opportunity to share their news and stories.



Tim Connole gets ready to share his morning tea with the Physiotherapy team

Keeping Up is aimed at health professionals, home care workers, rest home

staff, volunteers and anyone else with an interest in preventing falls and the devastating effect they have on our older population. Regular features will include profiles of successful falls prevention initiatives, local success stories and updates from latest research evidence and literature. We will also advertise upcoming conferences, seminars and events relating to falls.

Is there anything else you would like us to cover? This newsletter is for YOU so we would love to hear your comments and feedback. You are welcome to send us your stories for publication—the more we share, the more we all learn!

Our contact details can be found on the back page...

Taranaki Strategy Wins National Award

Use of national strategy in the development of our local Falls Prevention Strategy was recognised at this year's New Zealand Injury Prevention & Community Safety Awards.

In line with national guidance we are working to improve coordination and collaboration in the falls prevention sector in Taranaki.

The awards, organised by ACC and SCFNZ (Safe Communities Foundation NZ), recognise best practice in injury prevention.

We would now like to build on this success and link with wider networks of individuals and organisations who are working to improve the health and well-being of older people in our region. Keeping you informed is

the first step, and Keeping Up sets out to do just that!



Hon Maryann Street presents NPiS Trust representatives with NZ Safety Award 2008



Vicki Scott, TDHB
Physiotherapist,
oversees the OEP
programme

OEP...from the comfort of home

They say there are not many things in life that are free... However we are lucky in Taranaki to have the Otago Exercise Programme (or OEP for short). Not only is it free, but it is delivered by a trained health professional in the comfort of older people's own home.

Better still, OEP is proven to reduce falls by 35% and to reduce the severity of fall-related injury.

OEP is an individual exercise programme that consists of a series of leg strengthening and balance retraining exercises that get progressively more difficult as the older person gets stronger. A daily walking schedule usually forms part of the programme also.

During the programme, encouragement and support is provided through home visits and

telephone contact with a physiotherapist.

OEP has been shown to be most beneficial for those aged 80+ although those under 80 and at high risk of falls will be considered. The service extends across Taranaki from Waitara all the way to Whangamomona!

For more information contact the **Taranaki Physiotherapy Department 06 753 7742.**

“Ideas suggested so far include a wellbeing theme as well as a safety theme”

Community Falls Prevention Education

Would you be interested in shaping the development of a local community based education course for older people to raise awareness of the links between health, wellbeing and falls prevention?

Topics suggested so far have been based either on a wellbeing theme (nutrition, exercise, medication management, falls prevention) or a safety

theme (falls prevention, fire safety and crime prevention).

We would love to hear your ideas on the content and delivery of such a programme. If you would like to get more involved in this project, or would just like to share your ideas, please get in touch. **Our contact details are on the back page.**

Just a click away...new online directory



www.athomecare.co.nz

At Home Care directory has everything from Home Care services to Home Handyman services!

Did you know that Taranaki has its own online directory of services for older people?

If not, you need to log on to www.athomecare.co.nz to find out more about this amazing web resource designed for our region.

Developed as a private initiative by Margaret Millar, the directory includes everything from health services and rest home care through to gardening services and social clubs. ACC have kindly sponsored a page for NPiS

where we can raise awareness of falls and advertise local falls prevention services.

To find out more, contact Margaret Millar by emailing marg@athomecare.co.nz

FALLS PREVENTION ... ON TAP?



Research carried out in the UK suggests that increasing drinking water consumption in older people in rest homes may be a valuable yet overlooked form of falls prevention.

Is there a role for the humble glass of water in falls prevention?

Following an 18 months study where rest home residents were actively encouraged to drink more water, a number of health and wellbeing benefits were noted included improved sleeping patterns, greater energy levels during the day, decreased number of falls, reduced incidence of urinary tract infections and less GP call outs. One rest

home recorded a 50% reduction in falls during the study.

Availability, visibility and reminders were key factors to drinking more water. Peer to peer learning was cited as the main method for staff to learn about good hydration.

To find out more about the study please visit: <http://www.anglianwater.co.uk/assets/education&community/HEALTH%20ON%20TAP%20Report%20Lower%20res.pdf>

“One rest home in the study recorded a 50% reduction in falls”

Evidence Base: Hip Protectors

Reference: Bentzen H, Bergland A, Forsen L. Injury Prevention 2008; 14(5): 306-10.

OBJECTIVE: To compare hip fracture risk in soft and hard protected falls with the risk in unprotected falls and to compare the incidence of hip fractures in nursing homes providing soft and hard hip protectors.

METHODS: An observational study within 18 nursing homes. Nursing homes were randomized to offer either soft or hard hip protectors. Individual participants were followed for falls for 18 months.

RESULTS: Of 1236 participating residents, 607 suffered 2926 falls; 590 of the 2926 falls were categorized as soft protected, 852 as hard protected, and 1388 as unprotected falls. Sixty-six verified hip fractures occurred: eight in soft protected falls, 11 in hard protected falls, and 45 in unprotected falls. The hip fracture risk in soft and hard protected falls was almost 60% lower than in unprotected falls. The incidence of hip fracture

was 4.6 and 6.2 per 100 person-years in nursing homes providing soft and hard hip protectors, respectively.

CONCLUSION: Both types of hip protector have the potential, when worn correctly, to reduce the risk of a hip fracture in falls by nearly 60%. Both can be recommended to nursing-home residents as a means of preventing hip fractures.

“Australian study found hip fracture risk in soft and hard protected falls was almost 60% lower than in unprotected falls”

Web Watch...Rest Home RESOURCES

Managing the risk and effect of falls in care homes

This report, produced by UK-based organisation *Help The Aged* identifies the prevalence of falls amongst residents in care homes and lists examples of how care homes can reduce the risk and effect of falls. It

also contains practical action sheets which can be used to identify and manage risks in the rest home environment.

The report was written in May 2004 and updated in November 2006.

A PDF copy of the report can

be downloaded from the Help The Age website at the following link:

http://www.helptheaged.org.uk/NR/rdonlyres/7632054F-C5A2-4E10-B379-D5E49A53D9C5/0/preventing_falls_030907.pdf

HELP THE AGED WE WILL

Preventing Falls

Managing the risk and effect of falls among older people in care homes

UP & ABOUT in Taranaki

Actively Ageing in New Plymouth



Active in Age Tai Chi session at the TSB Stadium

“Active in Age” is just one example of the range of wonderful fitness and exercise groups we have on offer for older people in Taranaki.

This group meets every Tuesday, 10am-12noon at the TSB Stadium in New Plymouth.

Activities available include aerobics, Tai Chi, stretch-

ing, line dancing, indoor bowls, marching and more. All for just \$3 a session.

Keeping fit and active in later life reduces the risk of having a fall, and this group has something to suit everyone. New members are always welcome. A cup of tea and lots of fun is guaranteed!

If you would like to find out more please call Heather Sharp on 06 757 8854 or just turn up on Tuesday!



Active in Age Aerobics session

“For those that are really keen there are sessions running each morning from Monday to Friday”

Move it...or lose it!

Move It or Lose It is a programme of exciting exercise to music classes designed for 50's and beyond.

Classes cater for most ages and fitness levels, and, for those that are really keen, there are sessions running each

morning from Monday to Friday in venues across New Plymouth, Bell Block, Urenui and Waitara. For those who are less mobile, a seated exercise class also runs on a Tuesday morning.

Sessions are \$4 each (first class is free). All groups

are friendly and fun! Look out for a new class starting in Merrilands Hall next year...

For more information please call:

Diana 06 753 3333
Sonia 06 759 8918

Older Wiser...and busy in Hawera!

Local optician Andrew Judd was among the many stall holders at New Plymouth's recent Older Persons Wellbeing Day



Those who took part in the Positive Ageing Older Persons Wellbeing Day in June 2008 will agree it was lots of fun ... and hugely successful with over 230 older people turning up on the

day. Now a similar event is being organised in Hawera, thanks to South Taranaki District Council and Work and Income.

The Taranaki Older Persons Expo will be held on Thursday 26th February

2009, 10am-3pm at the Community Centre, Hawera. Expressions of interest are currently being taken for organisations who wish to attend on the day.

To register or to find out more, contact Wendy Bloor on 06 902 2809 or email wendy.bloor001@msd.govt.nz

POSITIVELY AGEING in Stratford



For those interested in finding out more about the issues that affect older people in Stratford the local Positive Ageing Forums are a good place to start. These forums, which are held in

the War Memorial Centre, Miranda St., are friendly, free and open to all. Topics covered at previous forums include health, legal issues and falls prevention. The forums are a good way to find out more about keeping fit and active, and, as our photo shows, sometimes offer an 'on the spot' exercise taster session!

To find out more about joining the group, or coming along as a speaker, please contact **Raewyn Gordon (Stratford Council) on 06 765 6099.**

In the meantime, for those who wish to become more active in Stratford, there is certainly plenty to do, including...

Active in Age: Monday & Thursday, 10.30am at the Health N' Fitness Centre, Page Street for Circuit Training. \$3 a session. Please contact Annette Stapp on 06 765 7130.

50 Forwards swimming & Aqua Aerobics: Please call 06 765 6275 for more information about these classes.

Wednesday Walkers: A weekly 'easy walking' group. Please call Ivan on 06 765 7212 or Wes on 06 765 5242.

A Greener Solution...

Unlike usual prescriptions, you can guarantee that a Green Prescription will not add to the number of medications you are taking! It also has the added bonus of being free!

A "Green Prescription" is simply written advice from a health professional to be-

come more active. Patients' take the prescription to Sport Taranaki who provide support via phone or community based group education.

Benefits include discounted membership at City Fitness Gym and the Todd Energy Aquatic Centre.

With exercise playing such an important role in falls prevention, a referral to Sport Taranaki may be just what the doctor ordered.

To find out more, call **Sport Taranaki on 06 759 0930.** Patients should be advised to contact their GP if they would like a Green Prescription.

Safe as Houses? Free Home Safety Checks!

Did you know that Age Concern offer a free home safety check service to all older people in Taranaki? The service is available to all over 65's (or 55+ for Maori & Pacific) and uses an ACC designed checklist designed to identify hazards within the home. The Age Concern field officer visits

the home, carries out the safety check and provides advice to the older person on how the home can be made safer.

The field officer will also fit free safety equipment such as night-sensor plug-in lights and bath mats if people feel

these would be beneficial. The older person may also be offered a referral to the Otago Exercise Programme or Tai Chi if it is felt they would benefit from this.

For more info please contact Eileen Hall at: **Age Concern Taranaki on 06 759 9196**



Free plug in night lights can be fitted during the home safety check visit



Visitors take the opportunity to try Tai Chi at a recent 'taster session'

Self Defence Against Falls...

Tai Chi involves a series of slowly performed gentle movements. The gentle, fluid movements are good for improving mobility, flexibility and balance.

Modified Tai Chi is a style of Tai Chi that has been developed for older adults. It is proven to reduce falls and works by improving lower limb strength and balance.

Modified Tai Chi is taught in a group setting within the community and in a class of 45 minutes to one hour duration. This programme involves participants attending two classes per

week over 20 weeks and classes run across Taranaki. To participate in an ACC funded modified Tai Chi class you need to be aged 65+ (55+ if Maori or Pacific) and have had a fall in the last 12 months. For more information please contact **Sport Taranaki on 06 759 0930**.



"Parkinson's affects everybody differently and there is much people can do to improve their balance and reduce the risk of falls"

Local support for Parkinson's Disease

People with Parkinson's Disease are more likely to experience falls as they age than people without the condition, however Parkinson's affects everybody differently and there is much people can do to improve their balance and reduce the risk of falls. The fear of falling can cause anxiety, sometimes leading to a loss of confidence in

walking and reduced participation in social and physical activities. If levels of exercise are reduced through anxiety, the result is often a decrease in strength and balance. Strategies to combat anxiety and fatigue as well as focusing on improving balance are beneficial. Other activities found to be helpful are: Modified

Tai Chi, Nordic Pole walking, stretching exercises, review of medication, and more.

The Parkinson's Society offers a wealth of information and practical support to its members to help them manage these difficulties.

For further information contact Sue Allemann, (Field Officer) Parkinson's Society on 06 751 2903

"Only 15% of fallers and 7% of non-fallers had taken part in a fall prevention programme"

Home care clients' participation in fall prevention activities.

OBJECTIVE: This Australian based study aimed to determine whether home care clients have accessed or been influenced by fall prevention programs.

METHODS: Mail survey of 4743 home care clients.

RESULTS: 47.2% completed the survey and 46% had fallen within the last year. Faller and non-fallers differed in attitude to falls and fall risk factors. Only 15% of fallers and 7% of non-fallers had taken part in a fall prevention program and only 8% knew how to access information about such activities.

CONCLUSIONS: Fall prevention strategies should be targeted at the home care population. Such programs should take into consideration the specific needs of this group.

Ref: Smith J, Lewin G. *Australian J Ageing* 2008; 27 (1): 38-42, Australian

Don't Mention the F-Word!

A new report, *Encouraging Positive Attitudes to Falls Prevention in Later Life*, looks at the reasons why people tend not to respond to advice on preventing falls and examines health promotion materials to see how they try to persuade people of the advantages of falls prevention measures – or how they deter people from taking them.

Research reveals that older people may be resistant to falls prevention advice

because they see it as relevant only to people older and frailer than themselves, they simply reject the idea that they are at risk or, they do not want to be stigmatised as being vulnerable. Advice given in an overly didactic, directive tone is generally not well received. In particular, advice about risk reduction may be seen as 'common sense' and may risk coming across as

patronising. The report recommends that rather than focusing on the risk of falls and the consequences, it is better to start by stressing the benefits of improving strength and balance. Many older people are receptive to messages about the positive benefits of exercises that improve balance and mobility, enhancing health, strength, confidence and enjoyment.



Encouraging Positive Attitudes to Falls Prevention in Later Life

by Professor Lucy Yardley (University of Southampton) and Professor Chris Todd (University of Manchester), published in 2005 by Help the Aged, London, UK

YOUR FEEDBACK...

We would like to know what you think of Keeping Up!

Please fill in this form and return to the address below by 31st January 2009 to be in to win a morning tea for your team/workplace!

Is the newsletter easy to read?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

Is the content relevant?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Please add any comments, ideas or suggestions for future issues below...

Did you learn anything new?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

What do you think of the newsletter length?

- Too long
- Too short
- Just right

Name: _____

Address _____

Email: _____

Contact: Channa Perry

Phone: 06 753 7777 ext 8792

Fax: 06 753 7788

E-mail: npis@tdhb.org.nz

New Plymouth injury Safe Trust

C/- Health Promotion Unit

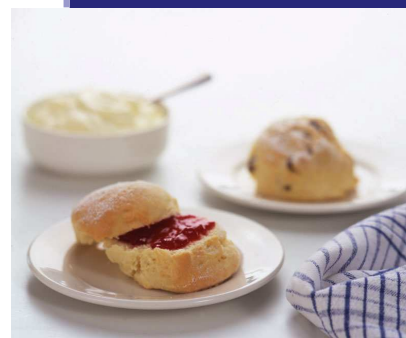
Taranaki District Health Board,

New Plymouth injury Safe Trust



Let us know what you think...

Send us your feedback on the new **KEEPING UP** newsletter and you will be entered into a draw to win a delicious morning tea for your team, delivered to your workplace!



NPiS*New Plymouth
Injury Safe*

New Plymouth injury Safe Trust

Contact: Channa Perry

New Plymouth injury Safe Trust
C/- Health Promotion Unit
Taranaki District Health Board,
Private Bag 2016, New Plymouth

Phone: 06 753 7777 ext 8792

Fax: 06 753 7788

New Plymouth - An International Safe Community

New Plymouth injury Safe Trust is a coalition of organisations who are committed to reducing injury in New Plymouth, and to keeping the district an International Safe Community based on criteria set by the World Health Organisation. New Plymouth was designated an International Safe Community in 2005.

However, our role often extends beyond the New Plymouth boundary and the facilitation of the Taranaki Falls Strategy Group is one example of this.

The Taranaki Falls Strategy Group is a network of representatives from various Taranaki-based organisations committed to promoting a coordinated and collaborative approach to preventing falls in older people in our region. The group meets quarterly and has developed a local Falls Prevention Strategy based on the framework of the New Zealand Falls Prevention Strategy. **New group members are ALWAYS welcome!**

For more info, please email Channa Perry at npis@tdhb.org.nz or ring 06 753 7777 x 8792

We're on the web...

www.npis.org.nz

TARANAKI FALLS PREVENTION STRATEGY...update

The Taranaki Falls Prevention Strategy aims out to promote a coordinated and collaborative approach towards the prevention of falls in older people in Taranaki. Actions are focused on raising awareness of falls prevention, improving access and uptake of falls prevention services and, ultimately, to develop a new integrated falls service for the region.

A number of activities are planned over the next year, and these include:

- Developing a community based falls prevention education programme
- Creating a patient information leaflet containing a falls prevention service directory
- Applying for funding for a Falls Prevention service coordinator for Taranaki
- Continue to hold falls prevention seminars and wellbeing events in our region to raise awareness of local falls services
- Simplify referral processes to local falls prevention services where possible
- Distribution of a quarterly newsletter (Keeping Up!) to share information with the older persons' sector
- Keep older people central to the Strategy's development



Falls Strategy Group members celebrate our NZ Safety Award success at a recent Falls Strategy meeting

If you are not already part of our Falls Strategy Group, we would love you to join us! All you need is a commitment to making a difference to the lives of older people in our region. Our next meeting will be held **25th February 2009, 9.30-11am** at the Health Promotion Unit meeting room (Taranaki Base Hospital)

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