Falls Specialist Service client information

A home-based falls prevention service to help you maintain your independence.

What is the Falls Specialist Service?

A Falls Specialist is a trained health professional who can visit you in your home to find out why you have previously fallen and/or identify risk factors that may put you at risk of falling. This will include assessing potential risk factor areas including:

* medication
* balance, walking and muscle strength
* footwear and foot health
* vision
* bladder and bowel function
* confidence with daily activities
* memory and mood concerns
* home environment
* health conditions eg. eyesight, blood pressure.

How do the Falls Specialists reduce your risk of falling?

The Falls Specialist will discuss your risk factors with you and make suggestions on how you can **take action** to reduce your risk of falls and stay safe and independent at home. This may include:

* a home or community **exercise program** which teaches you how to exercise safely to improve your balance and walking
* **equipment** to assist your walking or daily activities - this may include a visit by an occupational therapist
* a referral to a geriatrician and other members of the multidisciplinary team in a **falls clinic**
* advice to visit an optometrist, podiatrist, GP or **other health care provider** (at their usual cost)
* **home hazards reduction** and home modifications (eg. installation of grab rails, ramps or box steps)
* **podiatry review** for foot care or specific advice related to footwear
* **education related to the development of a personalised falls action plan - what to do if a fall occurs at home**
* **education** about activities that may contribute to your risk of falling
* referral for **medication review**
* referral for **community support assessment** (e.g. Home and Community Care or Aged Care Assessment Team).

The Falls Specialist will liaise with your general practitioner (GP) with regards to medical or medication issues that need further management.

The Falls Specialist will always ask for permission before making a referral and only provide relevant medical information to that professional.

How long does a visit with the Falls Specialist take?

The first assessment typically takes at least one hour. Depending on the results of your assessment, you may be seen a second time (or contacted by phone) to discuss and implement recommendations. The length of this visit will vary depending on the number of recommendations to discuss.

Further visits may be required if you are prescribed a home exercise program or equipment and home installations need to be arranged.

What support is available for doing home exercises?

The Falls Specialist may provide you with a home exercise program. Exercises are provided at an appropriate level for your physical capabilities.

The Falls Specialist or a Therapy Assistant can provide supervision to ensure you are doing the exercises correctly.

The Falls Specialist will call or visit you six months after your first appointment to review your progress.

**Important:** Inform your GP and the Falls Specialist immediately if you have any chest pain, dizziness, or are excessively short of breath while you are exercising.

What does the service cost?

There is no cost associated with the Falls Specialist assessment for public or private clients. There may however be some costs associated with the recommendations suggested by the Falls Specialist.

What are your responsibilities when a Falls Specialist visits you at home?

* It is important that you, a relative or neighbour contact us if you are not going to be at home for an appointment.
* We request that you do not smoke when we visit your home.
* To respect the human worth and dignity of staff who visit you, abuse (verbal or physical) will not be tolerated.
* Provide a safe environment (e.g. lock away any aggressive pets).

Can someone else speak on your behalf?

Yes, you can ask a family member or friend to advocate on your behalf. Or you can ask for an advocate from Advocare Incorporated who can be contacted on (08) 9220 0637.

If you require an interpreter, please let us know so we can arrange one to attend your appointments. Please note there is no cost to you for this service.

Contact details

Contact your local Falls Specialist Clinic via:

*[Insert contact details of the nearest Falls Specialist. Refer to the* [*Contact list*](http://www.healthnetworks.health.wa.gov.au/docs/falls_contacts.pdf) *for up to date details of each Falls Specialist Clinic.]*

OR

For further details regarding the Falls Specialist Service, contact Tony Petta (Falls Specialist Coordinator) via email [tony.petta@health.wa.gov.au](mailto:tony.petta@health.wa.gov.au), or directly on (08) 9346 3282.

We aim to provide a high quality service. We want to know if you have any concerns or suggestions. If you do not feel comfortable talking to the Falls Specialist, please contact the Consumer Liaison Support Officer through the hospital switchboard.