

Community Pharmacy Living Well Campaign

 Public Health
Agency

 Health and
Social Care

February 2023

Live longer and stronger ageing well campaign briefing

The Live longer and stronger ageing well campaign highlights how keeping active helps you to stay healthy and age well. The campaign will run throughout February and March 2023.

Campaign overview

Physical activity has been associated with many benefits for physical and mental health, with inactivity linked to the development of many non-communicable diseases.

The Chief Medical Officers (CMOs) say “be active for two and a half hours each week, do activities to improve muscle strength at least twice a week and limit the amount of time spent being sedentary, such as lying or sitting.”

Research shows that from 50 years of age we naturally lose muscle density year on year. Being physically active is very important - ageing is inevitable, but the pace at which physical changes occur can be slowed or even reversed with regular physical activity.

In Northern Ireland, NICOLA data indicates that 43% of adults aged 50 or over did not meet the UK recommendations of doing at least 150 minutes per week of moderate exercise. Inactivity rose with age and was higher in those living in deprived areas (Tully et al, 2017).

Among women in Northern Ireland, 41% of those aged 50-64 were deemed inactive (less than 150 minutes a week), rising to 47% of those aged 65-74 and 68% of those aged over 75. Among men, inactivity levels rose from 34% of those aged 50-64, to 37% of those aged 65-74 and 50% of those aged over 75 (Tully et al, 2017).



A North South study found that Frailty is three times more common in people aged over 60 in Northern Ireland than the Republic of Ireland (21% versus 7%). Older people here were more likely than those in the Republic to have difficulty with walking, stair-climbing, activity, co-morbidity, and especially exhaustion (38% compared with 9%) (Scarlett et al, 2014).

There was a strong socio-economic gradient with people from unskilled/semi-skilled backgrounds far more likely to be frail than people from professional/managerial backgrounds in both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland (Scarlett et al, 2014).

In addition to the health benefits to an individual, increasing physical activity across the population can have social, environmental and economic benefits for communities and wider society, including cost savings for the health and social care system.

Campaign aim

To raise awareness of the importance of ageing well, with a focus on physical activity.

Campaign audience

The campaign is for adults, with a particular focus on those aged 50 and over.

Campaign key messages

- Regular physical activity provides a range of physical and mental health benefits. These include:
 - having a healthy heart;
 - lowering the risk of future health conditions, such as type 2 diabetes, stroke and some cancers;
 - feeling happier;
 - keeping your brain sharp;
 - ageing well;
 - and reducing falls.
- The UK Chief Medical Officers say “be active for two and a half hours each week and do activities to improve muscle strength at least twice a week.”
- Limit the amount of time spent being sedentary, such as lying or sitting.
- Adults should aim to be active daily. A little activity every day can make a big difference.
- You are more likely to maintain your independence and overall wellbeing if you have led an active lifestyle and made healthy choices when you are younger.
- The more time spent being physically active, the greater the health benefits.
- It is never too late to gain health benefits from taking up physical activity. Even relatively small increases in physical activity can contribute to improved health and quality of life. The least active individual stands to gain the most from a small increase in physical activity.
- Every movement counts.
- Activities that improve strength and balance, such as carrying heavy shopping bags, yoga or doing exercises that use your own body weight, such as push-ups and sit-ups, contribute to healthy ageing, reduce the risk of falls and help you feel more confident.
- Information on how to get more active is available at www.choosetolivebetter.com



Campaign materials

Copies of the following materials are enclosed:

2x A3 posters:

Live longer and stronger with physical activity

What will your step count be today?

1x A1 poster: *Live longer and stronger with physical activity*



1/3 A4 leaflet:

Ageing well by being active every day



Pharmacies should display the posters and leaflets in the pharmacy within a designated health promotion display area. Posters can be rotated over the two-month period, but if space permits within the pharmacy all posters may be displayed at the same time. Pharmacies must show a poster in at least one window unit for the full duration of the campaign. The booklet can be added to prescription bags or handed to a customer upon request.

Campaign activities

Staff team activities

Pharmacy teams could organise a step count competition, exercise bike-cycling challenge or an activity that staff enjoy.

Staff may wish to take the opportunity to fundraise for a local community group or charity that supports Frailty with a sponsored activity, or organise a chair yoga demonstration in store or try organising your own pharmacy team Olympics.

Staff may wish to refer to *Take the next step* booklet to familiarise themselves with tracking steps for a pharmacy team activity or for sharing the idea of logging steps daily/weekly with patients.

Take the next step can be found here <https://hscbusiness.hscni.net/services/3035.htm>

Ageing well by being active every day leaflet

The campaign leaflet can be used as a conversation starter, added to prescription bags or given out with purchases made in pharmacy. Patients may wish to chat to pharmacy staff after reading it.

Buying vitamins and supplements

Opportunity to engage with patients purchasing supplements, such as calcium, magnesium, Vitamin D or Vitamin K, to promote the benefits of physical activity in helping to strengthen bones and the prevention of frailty and deconditioning.

CMO guidelines infographic

Refer to the CMO Physical activity guidelines for adults and older adults infographic and use as an opportunity to engage with patients and customers highlighting it is never too late to start being active. Health benefits are captured on the sheet. Remember these are not public messages but can be used by pharmacies to engage with patients.

Local activity opportunities

Find out what is available in the area around your pharmacy and advise patients/customers on local groups and where possible provide links to when these are scheduled. For instance,

- Walking groups
- Men's sheds
- University of 3rd age
- Community Partnership groups

See council webpage to access leisure centres or physical activity initiatives or projects in the area at

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/contacts/local-councils-in-northern-ireland>

Speak to local GP surgeries about any social prescribing initiatives which may be offered or make contact with social prescribing projects in your locality. There is a list available at <https://hscbusiness.hscni.net/services/3258.htm>

The campaign provides the opportunity to link with local care homes and their physical activity coordinators to promote the messages to staff and residents.

Be mindful about the medicines that could affect strength, balance or drowsiness and offer appropriate advice to patients, such as optimum time to take medicine. Perhaps undertake training in this clinical area or in associated medicines to further enhance your knowledge and help identify those at potential risk.

Advise those who are concerned about Frailty or illness to speak to their GP before undertaking exercise.



Signpost to further information and support

Patients and customers can be encouraged to visit www.choosetolivebetter.com for tips on how to build daily activity into their lives.

Encourage patients and customers to visit <https://frailtynetwork.hscni.net> a website full of information on network groups and resources regarding Frailty and advice on how to age well including physical activity, nutrition and more.

The website www.walkni.com is a comprehensive website that covers short, medium and long walks across Northern Ireland and categorises these into beach, urban, hillside, woodland and so on so customers can check out what types of walks are available close to them or further afield.

Training and professional development

Health Education England's online Frailty Education module is free and suitable for a range of staff, including community pharmacists. This training can be accessed at **Frailty - elearning for healthcare** (www.e-lfh.org.uk/programmes/frailty)

The Institute of Public Health offer a free online course, 'Getting Active for Better Ageing' to help healthcare professionals support older people to have more physically active lives. You can access the Public Health Matters desktop platform at <https://learning.publichealth.ie/> or download the Public Health Matters app for free on the Google Play (Android) and iTunes store (Apple).

NICPLD is providing a valuable learning opportunity via two recorded webinars on falls prevention available online from early February. The training can be viewed at: www.nicpld.org/courses/index.asp?programme=pharmacist&coursetype=ws&show=allusers&workshoptype=3



Social media and digital assets

For pharmacies using social media channels such as Facebook, Twitter or Instagram, there is an opportunity to let followers know the pharmacy is involved in the campaign and promote the campaign messages.

Please tag the Public Health Agency, Health and Social Care NI, Community Pharmacy NI and NICPLD in your posts and follow our social media accounts.



Twitter:

@publichealthni
@HSC_NI
@compharmacyni
@NICPLD1



Facebook:

@publichealthagency
@healthandsocialcareni
@communitypharmacyni
@NICPLD



Instagram:

@publichealthni
@health_and_social_care
@compharmacyni

All Living Well materials, including social media assets, can be viewed at: www.hscbusiness.hscni.net/services/3035.htm

Questions and answers

Q: I have a disability so I take it the guidelines don't apply to me?

A: The guidelines can apply to disabled adults. Adjust them based on your exercise capacity and any special health or risk issues. It's best you speak to your GP first. They can make recommendations based on your individual circumstances.

Q: I do cardio. Why do I need to do strength activities too?

A: Strengthening activities help to develop muscle strength and build healthy bones. In adults and older adults, they help to maintain strength and delay the natural decline in muscle mass and bone density, which occurs from around 50 years of age. Balance and flexibility exercises are also important for older adults, helping to protect against frailty and falls.

Q: How can I do strengthening activities without going to a gym?

A: There are lots of things you can do outside the gym to develop or maintain strength in the major muscle groups. These include heavy gardening, carrying heavy shopping and doing exercises that use your own body weight, such as push-ups and sit-ups.

Q: I don't really do any physical activity. How do I get started?

A: Set yourself realistic and achievable targets aiming to do 30 minutes of physical activity a day, most days of the week. For more information on target setting, getting active and incorporating this into your daily routines, visit www.choosetolivebetter.com



Q: What is Frailty?

A: Frailty is when someone is less able to cope and recover from accidents, physical illness or other stressful events.

Q: I find walking a bit boring but I can't afford to join a gym. How can I make it more interesting?

A: Make your walk more appealing by having someone to chat to as you walk, you could visit walkni.com and plan walks to interesting places or see if there is a local walking group you can join.



Public Health Agency
12-22 Linenhall Street, Belfast BT2 8BS.
Tel: 0300 555 0114 (local rate).
www.publichealth.hscni.net



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