DAY 7: One week in, staying independent and falls prevention workshops

Greetings everyone,

It's time to celebrate your first week of Take Five!

How are you feeling? Have you noticed any changes? Or are you finding it tricky? If you've been struggling to complete your action or stay motivated, that's very normal – remember if you miss a day or two, that's ok – just try again the next day afresh.

Today we are focusing on some of the things that are most important for staying independent - **strong bones, strong muscles and staying social.** For many people, staying independent is one of the most important things to maintain - many of us want to stay in our homes and look after ourselves. One important thing to consider is falls - as we age, our risk of falling increases which can cause broken bones or even hospitalisation. The good news - there are systematic things we can do to reduce our risk of falls and increase the chances of maintaining our independence for longer. Firstly, check out this guide from Hillingdon Council on avoiding slips, trips and falls. **Hillingdon Council also offers falls prevention workshops** that go through this guide and answer your questions - book your place on the website. So, are you ready for Day 7? Let's go!

Summary:

- **Calcium** remains essential throughout later life, helping maintain strong bones as natural bone density declines. This is important for avoiding frailty and staying resilient and independent. Dairy, fortified plant milks, leafy greens and bony fish are all good sources of calcium and supplements can help boost intake.
- Hydration doesn't only come from drinks, **many fruits, vegetables, soups and yoghurts have high water content,** offering an easy way to boost fluid levels, especially for those who struggle to drink enough. There are also specialist products like jelly drops that can support older adults.
- Age UK's ***Act Now, Age Better*** emphasises that it's never too late to start moving for your health. More information is on the Age UK website and if you are keen to get moving with others, Age UK Hillingdon has local opportunities including a specific 'Falls Prevention group' that focuses on strength and balance.
- Have a look at our **Live Well Together toolkit** which offers ideas of ways to stay connected and supported whilst acting to stay healthy.
- *My Health* on the Hillingdon website offers **free workshops** on common health issues to help you learn and support you to manage your health.

For more information...

Eat

As children we are given milk and regularly told that milk is good for our bones. That's because milk and dairy products are good sources of **calcium** and it's really important to keep up the calcium levels as an older adult also. As we age our bones lose density, becoming weaker and more brittle – particularly for women after menopause. This can increase our risk of fracture and our joints can stiffen as the cartilage also thins. Physical activity is key but so is calcium. Calcium supports our bone strength, muscles and even nerve function. Foods rich in calcium include dairy (milk, cheese, yogurt), fortified plant milks, leafy greens (kale, okra), bony fish (sardines) and fortified breads. If you are not sure you are getting enough calcium in your diet, as with vitamin D, consider taking a supplement.

Drink

We already know that we can feel less thirsty as we get older, which makes some people struggle to take in enough fluids.

If that sounds familiar, you'll love today's hydration tip. A 2020 study on hydration shared the good news that we can **hydrate as we eat certain foods.** Many fruits and vegetables are mainly water – for instance cucumbers (96% water), lettuce (96%), tomatoes (94%), oranges (86%), apples (95%) and as the name suggests watermelon (92%). Soups, broths and yoghurt are also good foods for keeping hydrated. And if these don't sound appealing, there are jelly drops that have been developed specifically to improve hydration in older adults.

Find out more about the foods to choose for an extra hydration boost in this BBC article.

Move

'Act Now, Age Better' is Age UK's campaign to get every older adult across the UK moving for better health and wellbeing. The campaign has facts and videos on why we are built to move, what types of movement are good and even what local groups you can join to get you moving. There are some key messages: **prioritise yourself, stay active and start today and build movement into your everyday life, but most importantly, it's never too late to start.** Movement is essential to keep our muscles and bones from losing strength which are both important to prevent falls and keep us able to get out independently with others. More information is on the Age UK website and if you are keen to get moving with others, Age UK Hillingdon has local opportunities including a specific 'Falls Prevention group' that focuses on strength and balance.

Connect and Engage

By joining the Take Five community, you're already taking part in something with like-minded people across Hillingdon. You all have a shared goal to stay strong and healthy into the future.

Now we're on day 7 of our month-long challenge, why not share how the first week was for you with a friend, family member or neighbour? It might not be someone taking part but they are likely to be interested – no matter what age we are, the information in Take Five is relevant to anyone that wants to stay healthy for longer and build their resilience.

If you find it challenging or struggle with the motivation to do Take 5 on your own, why not go one step further and invite a friend, family member to join you? We've also got this Live Well Together toolkit that could help you find fun activities to keep building your health.

Think

Just reading these emails is good for the brain – hopefully there is some new information that you are learning about healthy ageing and the many things we can do to stay independent. But, did you know that in Hillingdon, there are **workshops about specific health issues**. My Health, provides free workshops on prediabetes, hypertension, menopause and more to local residents with the aim of empowering and educating people to take control of their health by giving them the latest knowledge. Workshops are online or in person and provide plenty of opportunities to learn and ask questions about some of the most common health problems that can creep in as we grow older. So, why not stretch the brain some more and attend one of their workshops.

Tip of the day!

Have you heard of **Hillingdon Telecare?** Free for anyone over the age of 75, telecare offers an alert system (pendant necklace) that allows the user to alert a loved one or a call centre 24/7 should something happen at home (such as a fall). Particularly useful for those of us that live alone, telecare can also help install devices in the home to help with independent living such as medication reminders or smart lights and thermostats. Great extra security to keep you safe - have a look at the Hillingdon technology enabled care for more information and how to apply.

As we come to the close of our first week together, we'd like to say a huge thank you for getting involved. Congratulations on your progress so far… let's keep going, stick together and change the way we age!

Our very best wishes,

Team Take 5

Reminder: This information is general guidance and if you have any concerns over your own health please speak to your medical professional.