

Health Matters Column for April 09

Mother's Day – What should it really be about?

Mother's day is a day to remember the love and care given to us by our mothers and a chance for us to show her that we appreciate her and want her to be safe and well.

How can we do that? In many ways; we can buy her expensive gifts that she probably doesn't want or need, we can take her out to lunch and spend a couple of hours with her before dropping her off having done our duty, or we can also make sure that she is well cared for and has the ability to manage her own healthcare.

Services that can be accessed by Mum through her GP are:

- Cervical Smears
- Mammogram checks
- Lifestyle Change
- Bone Density checks
- Diabetes Checks
- Dietitian Advice
- Otago Exercise Program

The Otago Exercise Program which is one of the services that can be accessed is aimed at women 80 years or over, or in Maori and Pacific Island women 65 years or over, that experience falls. At age 65, the odds of having a fall are about one in three – increasing to one in two by the age of 80.

How can help to prevent Mum from falling and injuring herself? Ask her to talk to her GP, about getting a referral to the Otago Exercise Programme.

To be referred, she must:

- be aged 80 or older, or 65 if Maori or Pacific Islander
- live independently in the community
- have had a fall in the last 12 months or been judged at risk of falling

Why is Mother's Day a good time to think about this?

Because it is in our autumn and winter will be just around the corner. In cooler weather, older women tend to stay at home more and home is where the fall can occur.

If you're Mum has already started on the programme before winter sets in, her muscles and joints will be much stronger and she will be less likely to fall. The Otago Exercise Programme would be delivered in her home by a specially trained nurse or physiotherapist. She will receive ongoing support for 12 months. During this time your Mum would be visited five times and also be kept in phone contact between visits.

She would receive a folder of wonderful resources and also be given the opportunity to have a free smoke alarm and installation in the home if it is required.
Why not make this Mother's Day one that really counts?

For more information on the Otago Exercise Program please contact Sandi Murray on 09 839 0557 or email: sandi@healthwest.co.nz