



A HEALTHY PRESCRIPTION FOR KEEPING THE OVER 50s ACTIVE

What can Local Authorities and the NHS do to help health professionals encourage sedentary people over 50 reduce/manage health risks?

The response from East Herts Council is to work in partnership with the East and North Herts CCG to develop a physical activity programme called [Forever Active East Herts](#). Established at the end of 2015, there are now over 1,200 over 50s participating in activities across East Herts in village halls, community centres and sports clubs.

Activities are designed to meet the needs of people in this age group and the emphasis is very much on 'fun'. Classes cost from £2 on a pay-as-you-go basis and are run by qualified coaches. The activities themselves include Pilates, table tennis, bowls, tai chi, yoga, nordic walking and walking football. [See all classes](#).

Free Come and Try events are also held enabling people to sample different activities and find ones they enjoy. They can come for an hour or stay the whole day.

Evidence

There is one single reason for staying active, – it's good for us. [According to the NHS](#), it is medically proven that physically active people have a 35% lower risk of coronary heart disease and stroke, an 83% lower risk of osteoarthritis and a 50% lower risk of diabetes. Older people also have a 30% lower risk of falls.

No matter age, ethnicity, shape or size everyone can gain the benefits. Exercise makes us stronger and helps us maintain our mobility, balance and flexibility - and it's fun. It reduces the risk of obesity and major illnesses such as heart disease, stroke and type two diabetes. And it improves our mental health and sense of wellbeing.

Keeping fit is also an enjoyable social activity reducing the number of people feeling isolated and lonely.

How can Pharmacists in Hertfordshire help?

Please encourage all those over 50 who visit your Pharmacy to join a Forever Active class. For more information on how to do this, please direct them to the FAEH team on 01992 531695 or email: foreveractive50@eastherts.gov.uk. Please also help us 'spread the word' by following us on Twitter, we are [@foreveractivEH](#).