



Public Health
Agency



FALLS PREVENTION IN HOSPITAL

INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS
AND VISITORS

To reduce the risk of falls, please follow the advice in this leaflet.

We want to work in partnership with you, your relatives and carers to reduce your risk of falling. Our staff are committed to ensuring your safety whilst you are in our care.

Can We Prevent All Falls?

It is not possible to prevent all falls. Ward staff will assess your risk of falling and develop a falls prevention plan.

Remember hospital is not as familiar as home, so you may need extra help when mobilising. Some reasons why you may fall in hospital are detailed below:

- ▶ Disorientation in an unfamiliar environment.
- ▶ Reduced mobility due to pain or weakness.
- ▶ Problems with strength and balance.
- ▶ Recovering from illness or surgery.
- ▶ Certain medical conditions may increase your risk, either by affecting your balance or reducing your blood pressure.

Have You Had a Fall?

Tell us if you have fallen in the past 12 months or have a fear of falling.



Call Button

Please remember: **PRESS THE CALL BUTTON - DON'T FALL!**



Bedside and surrounding area



- ▶ Be familiar with your bedside environment and potential hazards; such as hospital furniture, tubing and leads etc. Ask for any items in your path to be removed.
- ▶ If you have concerns regarding the height of your bed or chair, please inform a member of staff.
- ▶ Please ensure that lighting is adequate to meet your needs prior to mobilising.

Vision



If you wear glasses, make sure they are clean, within easy reach and used as prescribed. Ask for help if you are having any trouble with your vision.

Hearing



If you wear a hearing aid, please make sure it is available and in good working order. Inform staff if it is not working.

When Getting Up



- ▶ Sit upright for a few moments on the edge of your bed before standing.
- ▶ Get up slowly and make sure you feel steady before walking.
- ▶ If you feel dizzy at any time – STOP, SIT DOWN, and let the ward staff know.

Mobility



If advised to mobilise:

- ▶ Use your recommended walking aid and if required ask for assistance.
- ▶ Keep walking aid close by and ask staff to check it is in good working order.
- ▶ Never lean on hospital furniture as it is often on wheels.

Clothing

Wear clothes that are not too long or loose that could cause you to trip or fall.



Footwear

Wear supportive, well-fitting shoes or slippers. Avoid walking around in socks or stockings. Ask for assistance if required. Remember: **PRESS THE CALL BUTTON - DON'T FALL!**



Using the Bathroom

Take care in the bathroom and ask for help if you need assistance. Please report any wet floors to a member of staff as soon as possible. Remember: **PRESS THE CALL BUTTON - DON'T FALL!**



Food

Eating a well-balanced diet can help reduce your risk of falls and improve bone health. Please follow any specific dietary advice you have been given.



Fluids

It is important to drink enough fluids (unless otherwise advised by a member of staff), as being dehydrated can cause you to fall.



Your Medication

Certain medications may increase your risk of falling. These include:



- ▶ Blood pressure medications
- ▶ Heart medications
- ▶ Diuretic or water tablets
- ▶ Strong painkillers
- ▶ Muscle relaxants
- ▶ Sleeping tablets
- ▶ Anxiety and depression medications
- ▶ Sedating medications e.g. antipsychotics, antihistamines
- ▶ Bladder control medications

If you have any concerns or think your medicines might make you more likely to fall, speak to a member of staff.

Information for Visitors

What can you do to prevent falls in hospital?

- ▶ Tell the ward staff if you are worried that your friend/relative is at risk of falling or if they have fallen in the last year. Tell them if your friend/relative is confused, has dementia or has vision impairment.
- ▶ Check with ward staff before helping your friend/relative to walk or leave the ward.
- ▶ Ensure that your friend/relative has access to well fitting footwear and clothing whilst in hospital.
- ▶ Keep the bedside free from clutter, hazards and obstacles. You can help with this by putting away chairs after visiting and with your friend/relative's permission, take home any unnecessary belongings.
- ▶ Tell the ward staff if there is a spillage that may cause a slip hazard.
- ▶ Place the bedside table, **CALL BUTTON**, drinks (if permitted), walking aid and other personal belongings such as glasses within reach.
- ▶ Ensure you do not raise or lower bed rails if they are in place, without seeking advice from nursing staff.
- ▶ Raise any other concerns you have about preventing falls in hospital with a member of staff.

Inform staff immediately if you see any hazards that might cause someone to slip, trip or fall.

Unfortunately, some patients will still fall despite preventative measures being in place. In hospital we cannot prevent all falls, however as a Trust we are committed to reducing the number of falls and injuries that may occur.

If you have any questions or concerns – please speak to a member of staff.

Useful Sources of Information Regarding Falls Prevention

Age UK

<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/health-wellbeing/exercise/falls-prevention>

08006781602

NHS Falls Prevention

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/falls/prevention/>

Royal Osteoporosis Society

www.theros.org.uk

0808 800 003

Thank you for reading this information leaflet.

Produced by the Public Health Agency (PHA) Regional Inpatient Falls Prevention Group (December 2023).