

Preventing falls in hospital

Information for patients and carers



Why might you fall?

The risk of falling increases as people age. Certain medical conditions, such as Parkinson's disease, Diabetes and Stroke, affect balance and put people at greater risk. Other factors include poor eyesight, hearing impairment and joint pain. Some medications have side effects that can make people dizzy.

Most falls happen at home, but people do fall at hospital too. This can be due to the unfamiliar environment, with furniture and other objects in unexpected places. People at hospital are often already unwell, weak or tired.

How to reduce the risk of falling when you are at hospital

When you come to hospital bring with you any walking aid you may need and keep it with you at all times.

When you arrive, tell the receptionist if you have any special needs, such as a hearing or visual impairment, or if you need help to get to the toilet.

Medications

It will be helpful to bring in a list of all your current prescribed and over the counter medication from home. This will enable us to have a closer look at what you are currently taking.

There are occasions where we can discuss with you a change in your medication, which could reduce your risk of falls.

Please ask your clinical team or the ward pharmacist if you have any questions related to your medicines.

Mobility

Take your time when moving around, and use your walking aid. Make use of grab rails and tell a member of staff if you feel unsteady or want to sit down. Take your time when standing up from a sitting position – don't rush. Allow yourself time to get your balance before walking. If you need help, please just ask the nursing staff.

Feet and footwear

Problems with your feet, like corns and overgrown or ingrown toenails, can affect your mobility and balance. If you have concerns, contact your Community Podiatry team. Patients with diabetes are at an increased risk of falling due to reduced sensation in their feet; our hospital podiatry team may be able to help patients with diabetes.

Wear suitable footwear when coming to hospital, as there is usually no carpet and you may not be used to the type of floor surface there.

Glasses

Our eyesight deteriorates as we age. It is important to have regular eye tests whether you wear glasses or not. **Eye tests are free for people over 60 in local opticians.**

If you wear glasses, bring them with you and wear them whenever you would normally. The better your sight is, the better your balance is.

Hearing aids

If you have a hearing aid, ensure you wear it at all times. Make sure that the battery is charged and have spare batteries with you. You are less likely to have an accident if you can hear staff clearly when they speak to you.

Staying in hospital

If you are an inpatient (staying overnight in hospital), we will ask if you:

- have had any falls in the past.
- are worried you might fall.

We will:

- ask you about your vision.
- provide you with a walking aid, if you need one during your stay.
- review your medications to minimise the risk of side-effects.
- check your blood pressure whilst lying down and standing up; this is to see if your blood pressure falls when you stand up.
- make sure you have suitable slippers or shoes that fit properly; if not we will provide non-slip socks for you.
- ask you questions about your continence.

Staying in hospital

We may also:

- test your memory.
- talk to you about using the bedrails.

Call bells

We will check on you regularly to see if you need anything, or if you would like help with, for example, going to the toilet. If you need help at other times you will have a call bell, which we will ensure is within your reach. There are also call bells in the toilets and bathrooms.

DON'T FALL, PLEASE CALL – USE THE CALL BELL!

DON'T TAKE ANY RISKS THAT COULD LEAD TO A FALL

We will put your bed to the lowest level possible and suitable for you.



**LOW
BEFORE
YOU GO**

If you have any questions or concerns about falling while in hospital, please ask to speak to the department's Falls Champion.

Further information

If you would like an interpreter, please speak to the department where you are being seen.

Please also tell them if you would like this information in another format, such as:

- Easy Read
- large print
- braille
- audio
- electronic
- another language.

We have tried to make the information in this leaflet meet your needs. If it does not meet your individual needs or situation, please speak to your healthcare team. They are happy to help.

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