



INFORMATION AND ADVICE FOR THE PREVENTION OF FALLS

A guide for patients and carers



'always there to care'

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In the Hospice

You may have been assessed as being at risk of having a fall.

Risk of falls - why do people fall?

- **Poor vision** - may cause you to trip over obstacles
- **Confusion** - sometimes getting an infection can cause confusion, which puts you at risk of falling
- **Postural hypertension** - standing up quickly can make you dizzy. Stay still a while to let this settle before walking.
- **Foot wear** - poor fitting/sloppy shoes can cause you to trip.
- **Continence** - problems with continence can cause you to rush, or need to change regularly putting you more at risk. Help and advice can be sought from your GP.
- **History of falling** - people who have fallen can lose their confidence. The fall could be a result of an underlying problem. Seek advice from your GP.
- **Poor mobility** - reduced mobility can result in falls. Seek advice on walking frames to give you more support and exercise to improve mobility.
- **Environment** - the layout of your home (furniture and rugs) can increase the risk of falls.

Reduce the risk of falling by following these guidelines:

1. Take extra care when you get out of bed or stand up.
2. Avoid using hospice fixtures to help you stand, such as bedside lockers, they are usually on wheels and therefore unstable.
3. Wear footwear at all times when moving around.
4. If you have a walking aid use it, when you're moving around.
5. Take your time and don't rush when moving around.

Remember the hospice environment will not be as familiar as your own home. When you're a patient in the hospice, please follow these guidelines:

1. Ensure your day or nightwear isn't too large or long, and ask your carer, relative or friend to consider this when they bring clothing in for you.
2. Make sure you wear lightweight, well fitting footwear.
3. Ask your carer, relative or friend to bring any walking aid you usually use.
4. If required, ask your carer, relative or friend to bring in items such as hearing aids, glasses, dentures etc.
5. It's always best to bring any medication you usually take into the hospice with you when you're admitted, as it is useful for the doctor to see these.

Keep your personal items in the bedside locker where they're in easy reach. If you're a carer, relative or friend you can help the patient and the staff by:

1. Informing the nursing team if the patient has had previous falls.
2. Putting your chairs away when you leave and avoid moving furniture around.
3. Ensuring the patient knows where the nurse bell is, and if necessary place it in easy reach.
4. Bringing in lightweight shoes/well fitting slippers and clothes that are not too big or too long for the patient to wear.
5. Bringing in personal items such as hearing aids, glasses, dentures, as well as waking aids etc.

Always inform the nursing team if you have any concerns, as we may:

- Move the patient's position within the unit
- Use the safety rails on the bed (only appropriate in certain individual circumstances)
- Put the bed in a different position
- Use a different type of bed
- Place a mattress on the floor
- Undertake hourly care rounds, assessing basic needs
- Offer red, grip socks to prevent slipping
- Use chair/sensor pads.

These guidelines and suggestions are designed to protect a patient from injury and falls.

Unfortunately, some patients may still fall, despite all the guidelines in this booklet being followed. It is not possible to prevent all falls even in a hospital environment.

Our aims is to work in partnership with you in an attempt to reduce falls.

If you have any questions, or would like more information please contact a member of the nursing team.

In the home

Do:

- Remove or secure loose rugs and carpets
- Use bright light bulbs (100 watt)
- Clean up spills immediately
- Have a light at the side of your bed
- Use lights at night
- Have a firm hand rail fitted on both sides of the stairs
- Store regularly used items within easy reach
- Ask for help with tasks such as changing light bulbs and cleaning windows
- Keep stairs and walkways clutter free
- Use walking aids provided as directed.

How you can help yourself

- Take gentle regular exercise to maintain muscle strength
- Good nutrition and fluid intake
- Take your time. Don't rush to answer the telephone
- Have your eyes and feet regularly checked
- Let your GP know when you have fallen
- If you're taking several prescribed tablets, see your GP regularly for a review
- Minimize bending and reaching
- If you experience any changes in symptoms for example dizziness or visual changes, please seek advice from your GP.

Keep salt handy in the winter to put on your external paths.

What to do if you fall

Assess the situation

If you're hurt, or unable to get up try to summon help either by banging on a wall or using a pendant alarm.

Stay warm and comfortable.

If unhurt and you feel you can get up, the following method is one safe way to get up:

Ease yourself onto your elbows



Move onto your hands and knees



Hold onto a firm surface to support yourself



Facing the chair, ease yourself into a standing position



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