



Adult Inpatient Falls Prevention Advice for Patients, Relatives & Carers

Falls in hospital are the most commonly reported patient accidents. People may fall in hospital for a variety of reasons including:

- General weakness or balance problems
- Sudden changes in health
- Poor eyesight
- The effects of medications
- Slipping due to inappropriate footwear
- Disorientation due to unfamiliar surroundings

People who are recovering from surgery may be at higher risk of falling during this period. The Royal Orthopaedic Hospital NHS Trust takes patient safety and the reduction of the occurrence of falls very seriously. In accordance with guidelines supplied by the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE), we aim to reduce your risk of falling during your hospital stay by:

- Training staff in falls management and prevention
- Giving advice in a simple and practical way
- Responding quickly to hazards brought to our attention
- Ensuring that the hospital environment is as safe as possible
- Assessing each patient's risk of falling and delivering care to manage any risks
- Providing anti slip anti embolic stockings

What can you do to reduce your risk of falls?

Some of the following may help you to reduce your risk of falling:

Poor eyesight:

- Wear your glasses
- Use your night light
- Keep everything you need within easy reach, including your nurse call bell

Poor balance/weak muscle strength:

- Use your nurse call bell to get help and wait for someone to attend to you



**CALL
DON'T
FALL**

Ask for help when you need it

Falls can happen in hospital when people don't ask for help. Don't worry; you're not being a nuisance! We want to make sure you're safe, so if you need to move around or go to the toilet, ring your buzzer and let us know.

Please call, don't fall

RING YOUR BUZZER



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- Avoid stretching or bending to reach things
- Wear non-slip, well-fitting shoes or slippers, especially if you are wearing stockings to reduce your risk of developing a blood clot
- Only use walking aids that you have been assessed as safe to use by the physiotherapist
- Avoid wearing clothes which may cause you to trip; for example, dressing gowns with belts (if worn please ensure dressing gown belts are secured). We encourage you to dress in comfortable day clothes

Medications:

Some tablets and medicines can also put you at a higher risk of falling, by causing dizziness. These include tranquillisers, anti-depressants, sleeping tablets and some heart tablets and pain medications.

Please –

- Call for assistance if you feel weak or dizzy
- Get up from your bed or chair slowly – if you have had surgery your body may take longer to adjust
- If any medicine is making you feel dizzy, please talk to your nurse

Pace yourself:

- Don't try to do too much at once
- Look where you are going!
- Slowing down will help you to maintain an upright posture
- Drink plenty – staying hydrated can help reduce your risk of falls
- Do not be afraid to ask for assistance when you need it

Advice for relatives, carers and other visitors

For the safety of patients, it would help us greatly if you would report to staff any possible problems you may have seen such as;

- Spills of liquids on the floor
- Trailing wires or cables
- Obstacles around the bed-space or ward area

We would also ask that you:

- Leave the patient's room/bed-space tidy by replacing your chairs
- Take any unnecessary items home to reduce bed-side clutter
- Replace bed tables and call bells moved during your visit
- Ask nursing staff to replace bedrails if in use



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- Ensure your relative has well-fitting footwear and clothing with them
- Report to nursing staff any concern you may have if you think your relative or friend is disorientated or not themselves

If your relative/friend has had a fall and is at risk of falls, please help us by:

- Reminding them to be careful when moving
- Reminding them to use their walking aids in hospital
- Ensuring wheelchair brakes are on whenever someone is getting in or out
- Letting us know about a fall - if your relative or friend has had a fall whilst you are visiting, please tell a member of staff as a matter of urgency. We may need to do some first aid checks or use some equipment to help get your relative up and about again.

Preparing for home:

Many hints and tips on these pages may be useful at home too. Ensure the home environment is ready for your discharge from hospital.

- Remove any rugs
- Beware of any possible loose or broken paving stones in your garden or path
- Beware of any drain covers, small steps or other obstacles
- Plan ahead so there is no need to hurry
- Always take your medications as directed
- See a podiatrist or other foot health practitioner – keep your feet healthy
- Should you start to have falls, please discuss this with your GP. You may need a referral to a local falls prevention service in your area.

The advice in this leaflet is designed to reduce the risk of patients in hospital having a fall or injury. Despite everyone's best efforts, some patients will continue to fall.

Sources of further information:

Age UK: www.ageuk.org.uk/Charity | Staying steady. Keep active and reduce your risk of falling.

NICE: www.nice.org.uk/guidance/CG161 | Falls: assessment and prevention of falls in older people.

Falls – NHS Choices: www.nhs.uk/conditions/falls/pages/introduction.aspx

Falls Prevention – NHS Choices: www.nhs.uk/Conditions/falls/Pages/prevention.aspx

If you have a concern which the ward staff cannot address, please ask the nurse in charge or a member of staff to arrange contact with the hospital Falls Team Lead to discuss the management of falls (during office hours).