

# Preventing Falls During Your Hospital Stay

Your health and safety is important to us. Together, we can lower your risk of falling while in the hospital.

## You may be at risk of falling because:

- You have been sick or had surgery.
- Your footwear does not fit well.
- You often have an urgent need to go to the bathroom and move too fast.
- You feel confused.
- You are taking medications that may make you feel sleepy or lower your blood pressure.
- You are in a place that is not familiar to you.

## Hospital bed safety

- **Bed height:**
  - › Your bed height should be set at knee-level when you are getting up, unless your health care provider tells you otherwise.
  - › Staff will help adjust the bed for you.
- **Call bell:** Always make sure you can reach your call bell.
- **Bed rails:**
  - › **Never climb over bed rails.**
  - › Use your call bell to ask for help if your bed rails are up.
- **Hip protectors:**
  - › Falls are the most common cause of hip fractures for older adults.
  - › Hip protectors may help prevent hip fractures, depending on your risk. Ask staff where to buy hip protectors.

## Getting up

- Take your time when you are getting up.
- Sit on the bed for a minute, then slowly stand up.
- Standing up too fast, or standing after being in bed for a long time, can make you dizzy.

- If you feel dizzy:
  - › Sit back down and take a moment to rest.
  - › Try again when you feel able. Go slow.
- Get your balance before you start to walk.
- **Do not** use furniture to support yourself. Some pieces of hospital furniture have wheels. **They are not safe to hold on to.**

### Going to the washroom

- Use your call bell to ask for help getting up and going to the washroom if needed, especially at night. You are not bothering staff when you ask for help. We are here to help you.
  - › Please be patient and wait for help to come.
- Always use the handrails by the toilet and sink.

### Safety reminders

- Ask staff to put your personal things where you can reach them.
- Wear your glasses and hearing aids, if needed. Make sure they are working properly.
- If your room is dark, ask staff to turn on the lights above your bed or in your room.
- Tell staff about any spills or things on the floor that could get in the way.
- Wear shoes that fit well. Flat shoes with enclosed heels (no slip-on or backless shoes), rubber soles, and laces are best. **Do not** wear slippers unless they fit well and have non-slip soles. Ask for grippy socks if you do not have proper shoes. **Do not** wear grippy socks inside your shoes.
- Always make sure wheelchair brakes are on before sitting down or standing up.
- If you have a walking aid (like a cane or a walker), make sure you use it **at all times**. Ask for help if you cannot reach your walking aid.

This pamphlet is for educational purposes only. It is not intended to replace the advice or professional judgment of a health care provider. The information may not apply to all situations. If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

Find this pamphlet and all our patient resources here: <https://library.nshealth.ca/Patients-Guides>

Connect with a registered nurse in Nova Scotia any time: Call 811 or visit: <https://811.novascotia.ca>

*Prepared by:* Provincial Falls Prevention Program  
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