

Preventing Falls and Injuries During Your Hospital Stay

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

Why am I at risk of falling?

You may be at risk of falling because:

- You have been sick or had surgery.
- Your slippers or footwear do not fit well.
- You often have an urgent need to go to the bathroom and move too fast.
- You have confusion.
- You are taking medications that may make you feel sleepy or lower your blood pressure.
- You are in a place that is unfamiliar 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 among older adults.
 - › Hip protectors may help prevent hip fractures, depending on your risk. Ask staff where to find hip protectors.

Getting up

- When getting up, take your time.
- 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 hospital furniture has wheels and is not safe to hold on to.

Going to the washroom

- You are not a burden! Use your call bell to ask for help getting up and going to the washroom if needed, especially at night.
- Please be patient and wait for help to come.
- Always use the handrails by the toilet and sink.

Safety reminders

- Ask staff to place your personal things within reach.
- Wear your glasses and hearing aids. Make sure they are working properly.
- If your room is dark, ask staff to turn the lights on above your bed and/or in your room.
- Tell staff about any spills or things on the floor that could get in the way.
- Wear footwear that fits well. Flat shoes with enclosed heels (no slip-on/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 footwear (do not wear grippy socks in 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 walker), make sure you use it at all times. Ask for help if you cannot reach your walking aid.

*Prepared by: Provincial Falls Prevention Program
Designed by: NSHA Library Services*

The information in this handout is for informational and educational purposes only.
The information is not intended to be and does not constitute health care or medical advice.
If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.