

# Avoid Falls in Hospital

## Fall Prevention Information for Patients



### What increases your risk for falls?

- Being in a new place
- Having surgery
- Having tubes/equipment in place
- Having trouble with balance
- Taking medication that makes you drowsy, dizzy or confused
- Having vision problems
- Having trouble remembering
- Having a change in thinking, feeling, or behavior (*altered mental status*)
- Needing to use the toilet often
- Having a history of falls or recently fallen in the past three months
- Decreased energy levels or feeling weak
- Having low blood pressure when standing up quickly (*orthostatic hypotension*)

### How can hospital staff help?

- ☑ Orientate you to the area
- ☑ Assess your fall risk and create a personalized plan to prevent falls
- ☑ Check in regularly
- ☑ Show you where the nurse call button is, how to use it and keep it within reach
- ☑ Keep your personal items and mobility aids within reach
- ☑ Demonstrate how to properly use assistive devices
- ☑ Keep equipment with wheels in the locked position when not in transit
- ☑ Counsel you on medication side effects
- ☑ Keep the area around you free from clutter
- ☑ Remove unnecessary equipment/tubes to reduce the risk of tripping
- ☑ Use safety equipment, such as:

- Mobility aids
- Lifting and transfer equipment
- Non-skid socks/shoes
- Grab bars
- Beds that can be locked and lowered
- Fall mats

# How can you prevent falls in hospital?

If you have to stay in the hospital, talk with your health care team about your risk of falling. Work with your health care team to make a plan to stop falls.

## Suggestions to avoid falling:

- ☑ Do not move around if you feel off balance
- ☑ Change positions slowly—sit on the side of the bed and allow your body to adjust before standing up
- ☑ Use both hands for support when getting on and off a bed, chair or toilet.
- ☑ Hold on to a stable object when moving from bed, chair or walker
- ☑ Sit down and call for help if you feel dizzy or unsteady when standing
- ☑ Wear proper nonskid footwear
- ☑ Ensure clothing fits well and is not dragging
- ☑ Wear eyeglasses and hearing aids when needed
- ☑ Remove all clutter
- ☑ Ensure the brakes are on when getting up or down from bed or wheelchair
- ☑ Keep the nurse call button within reach
- ☑ Keep the door open if medically appropriate
- ☑ Have someone stay with you
- ☑ Find out which treatments can cause dizziness or affect balance
- ☑ Know the proper use of any assistive devices
- ☑ Recognize when you are tired
- ☑ Have a clear well-lit path to the bathroom (especially at night)

## Your safety is important to us. Call staff for help when

- ☑ getting up and moving around (especially after surgery or when feeling unwell)
- ☑ you are not sure you can to move around safely
- ☑ you feel dizzy or unsteady
- ☑ you need objects that are out of reach
- ☑ getting to and from the bathroom
- ☑ **you have fallen**

