

When you are walking:

- Take your time when turning around. Count your steps to pace yourself
- If you have a walking aide make sure it's in good condition and the right height for you. Keep it within easy reach
- Always use your walking aid. **DO NOT** rely on furniture for support as it may topple
- Always use your **CALL BELL** and wait for assistance if instructed

Clothing / Footwear

Tripping on loose or full-length clothing, including dressing gowns and pyjamas can also cause a fall. Slippers and other footwear should fit securely and have flat, non-slip soles. If you are required to wear **compression stockings** (anti embolic), you should always wear non-slip footwear over the stocking when walking around.

Diet and Exercise

To maintain your health and reduce your falls risk, good nutrition and suitable exercise are important.

- Ask your doctor, nurse or physiotherapist about what's suitable for your condition
- Gently mobilise as soon as you are able.

High falls risk patients

A number of strategies will be implemented if you are identified as a **high falls risk**. These strategies alert staff to your risk level to ensure you are provided with maximum support and safety. These may include:

- A physiotherapy mobility assessment
- High falls risk nurse alert
- Notification at bedside
- A pair of non-slip socks
- Review of your medication/s
- A coloured wrist band

Non-Slip Socks

Our high falls risk patients may be offered a pair of **non-slip socks**, to further help reduce your risk of falling. If you are assessed as suitable for them, we encourage you to wear these at **ALL** times.

REMEMBER:

Preventing falls is important when you go home as well, so before you go home you may be referred to follow-up services to ensure your home is safe and/or programs to ensure you have adequate skills for home.

For your additional safety please discuss hints for prevention of falls at home with your family / carer prior to discharge.

Please ask for help if you feel you need it. We can teach you ways to reduce your chances of falling.



Patient Information Brochure

KEEPING A STEP AHEAD OF FALLS

Falls Prevention Program

Did you know

It has been estimated that one third of people over 65 years and half of people over 80 years suffer at least one fall per year. In Australia 38% of all hospital patient incidents involve a fall.

We would like to reduce the number of falls that happen when you are in our care. To do this we have a **Falls Prevention Program**.

Some patient characteristics have been identified as being associated with a higher risk of falling.

So please let us know of any falls you have experienced in the last 12 months, or if you are concerned about having a fall whilst in hospital or at home. It is as easy as a referral to our allied health team (a physiotherapist) for an assessment.

Most importantly, if staff recommend you need assistance/supervision when moving please ask them for assistance and wait until they come to help you.

Your nurse CALL BELL is there for your safety.

Handy hints to avoid falls in hospital Unfamiliar Surrounds

- Make sure you know the layout of your room – *furniture & bathroom*
- Take care if you are walking around at night - *A small night light can be turned on at your request*
- Ensure that a **CALL BELL** is within your reach at all times and please use it
- If you have spectacles only wear your distance ones when walking - *Take special care if wearing bi or multi-focal lenses*
- Let staff know if you feel unwell or unsteady on your feet
- Take your time when getting up from sitting or lying
- If getting up from a lying down position, sit on the edge of the bed for a few minutes
- Move your ankles up and down to get the blood flowing
- Push yourself up off the bed or chair **DON'T** pull your self up
- Wait a minute before you start to walk

Visiting the bathroom

Many falls occur in the bathroom, therefore ensure you use your **CALL BELL** for assistance and allow sufficient time. Please try not to wait until you are in a hurry to go to the bathroom!

Flooring

Watch those floors!

Many of our rooms and corridors have linoleum or similar covering which can be slippery. Therefore, when out of bed:

- Ensure you have footwear that fits securely and has flat, non-slip soles
- Minimise the use of talcum powder as this causes slippery surfaces
- Do not walk with only socks or stockings on without appropriate footwear

Confusion

Unfortunately, an unwanted side effect of having some illnesses or surgery can be confusion. If you are confused you are at high risk of falling. Always use your **CALL BELL** and wait for assistance.

Family and carers can assist hospital staff by alerting them if they notice a change in their relatives' mental state.

Medications

Some pain relieving drugs and other medications, or a change in dose can make you feel dizzy or unsteady on your feet. Please use your **CALL BELL** to advise nursing staff if this happens to you.